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Clay Rectory, Thetford, Norfolk.  
Dear Sirs,—I enclose Post Office Order for my Riding Belt. I have now thoroughly tested the Belt by riding long distances, as much as fifty or sixty miles a day, and by other exercises attended with strain to the back and loins, and I affirm, without hesitation, and also with much pleasure, that it has proved of great benefit to me. I beg now to ask your advice as to the case following.—Waiting your reply I remain, dear Sirs, very truly yours,  
**THOS. J. BREWSHER.**  
Messrs. Darlow and Co.

From the Rev. **JOHN STOCK, LL.D.**  
Quarndon Lodge, Huddersfield.  
Messrs. Darlow and Co.  
Gentlemen,—I have derived immense benefit myself from wearing one of your 'Knee Caps.' I was troubled with rheumatism in the knee, which was gradually becoming stiff, but your 'Knee Cap' soon removed every unpleasant symptom. I had left off the cap for months, but this winter weather has provoked a return of the symptoms, and now I am wearing the Cap again, and with a renewal of all the beneficial results formerly enjoyed. You may make what use you please of my case.—Yours truly,  
**JOHN STOCK.**

From **MAJOR A. TREW.**  
9, St. James's-terrace, Winchester.  
To Messrs. Darlow and Co., West Strand, London.  
Gentlemen,—I came to know of your appliances by means of one of your pamphlets at a time when I was ill in bed. I showed the book to my doctor, who said it was of no use. Notwithstanding, I made up my mind to buy the Belt, and have now been wearing it eighteen months, during which time it has not cost me one shilling for medical advice, which, together with the improved state of my health, is indeed much to be thankful for. If you will send me a few of your business books, I shall have much pleasure in bringing them to the notice of all who are known by me to suffer.—I remain, Gentlemen, yours sincerely,  
**MAJOR A. TREW.**

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THE  
Nonconformist and Independent.  
THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 1880.

## THE BURIALS BILL IN COMMITTEE.

LAST week we expressed the opinion that the action of the House of Lords on the second reading of the Burials Bill had, so far, justified the tactics of the Government in introducing the measure in their lordships' House. The subsequent proceedings in committee have, however, somewhat justified our previously expressed doubts on the point. For, without absolutely receding from their position on the second reading, the peers have mutilated the Bill, and apparently with less sense of responsibility than would have been shown had the measure been first dealt with in the Commons, and the points in dispute settled there, as they would have been, been, after full discussion and by decisive majorities.

The House of Lords transacts its business in committee in so conversational, not to say so slovenly, a fashion, that the quickest ears cannot follow the proceedings, and, as a consequence, neither those who are present, nor those who have to rely on newspaper "Parliamentary intelligence," have a complete knowledge of what transpires. Until, therefore, the Bill has been reprinted we cannot speak with confidence in regard to minor amendments, whether made at the instance of the LORD CHANCELLOR or of others. The more important questions which were raised and decided on Tuesday are, however, clear enough for immediate comment, and the results are too obvious to admit of dispute.

In the first place, the House of Lords, by adopting, by a majority of twenty-four, Lord MOUNT-EDGUMBE's amendment, making the Bill applicable only to places "where there is no unconsecrated burial-ground or cemetery in which the parishioners or inhabitants have rights of burial," has seriously limited the operation of the Bill. It has done more than that; since it has furnished a strong stimulus to bigoted Churchmen to endeavour more and more to exclude Nonconformist services from churchyards, either by gifts of land, to remain unconsecrated, or by the compulsory provision of cemeteries in which there will be unconsecrated ground. As a consequence, this root of bitterness will not merely continue, but will spring up afresh whenever there is an Episcopalian majority bent on making the most of this device for nullifying the liberal enactments of the Legislature. Not only, therefore, will these words create a distinction between parishes, but they may make the line of distinction a constantly shifting one; and so, while Parliament professes anxiety to put an end to controversy on the subject, it will virtually have provided for the continuance of controversy, and that in the worst form, because it will be parochial, and not parliamentary. The amendment was defended on the ground that it made the Bill a means only of meeting a practical grievance with a practical remedy. But it will not fully meet the grievance; because, wherever a Nonconformist has a grave in the churchyard, it will matter nothing to him that other people have graves in unconsecrated ground elsewhere. He will be left in precisely the same position as that which he occupies at the present moment.

The Archbishop of York's amendment—carried by a majority of nineteen—is, in some respects, of a yet more serious character; because it virtually makes the Bill a churchyard Bill only, and thereby destroys an important feature of the Government measure. Yet this alteration was made with the least possible discussion, and without anything like an adequate attempt to prove either its reasonableness or its wisdom. The same objection applies to this amendment as to that of Lord MOUNT-EDGUMBE, viz., that whenever it is wished to have a Nonconformist service in the consecrated part of a cemetery there will be the same legal obstacle as that which now exists in the churchyard. Yet the latter is about to be removed by the Legislature. Not only so, but the LORD CHANCELLOR has now inserted words in the Bill which will allow the clergy to officiate in the unconsecrated parts of cemeteries, while Nonconformist ministers will not have a corresponding right on the other side. The former are to have the benefit of freedom; the latter will still suffer from a monopoly!

The somewhat fantastic objection that if the Act applies to cemeteries, Nonconformists will rush to, and fill up, the consecrated ground, shows that the bishops are bent on keeping up the distinction which the mass of the laity are willing, if not anxious, to remove. It also shows the necessity for adopting a principle in this matter, and logically applying it to all our burial arrangements. The Government Bill did not do that in the first instance, and as it now stands, it is a much more halting measure than it was before. Possibly there may be an advantage in this; for if the Act leaves

the cemetery grievance untouched, the case for a new agitation will be irresistibly strong, and, after the public mind has been further educated on the point, even the bishops will be led to look at it in a different light.

LORD SALISBURY, who, in 1876, suggested that the adoption of the principle of Mr. MORGAN'S Bill would meet with even tumultuous resistance on the part of the clergy, kept silence on the second reading of the Government Bill this year. On Tuesday he once more spoke; but, we admit, with abated force and bitterness; while he appeared this time as the champion—not of the clergy, but of the landowners, who have, it is asserted, during the last sixty years given land for churchyard purposes, on the assumption that the present exclusive ecclesiastical system would last for ever. His pleas were plausible, but they were met by the inexorable logic and statesmanship of Lord SELBORNE, who argued, with as much force as any Liberator could do, that whatever is given to the State must be accepted by the State without any limitations as to its ultimate use. And this reasoning prevailed even with peers who had voted against the Government in previous divisions; so that the amendment of Lord SALISBURY was lost by thirteen votes—a satisfactory result as regards this Bill, but much more satisfactory in its bearing on future legislation relating to the Establishment.

The Bill will be considered in its amended form to-morrow, and will then, no doubt, be still further amended, though not in any important respect. We shall, therefore, soon be in a position to consider what course of action may be best pursued when the Bill reaches the House of Commons. The *Times*, no doubt, is right in predicting that "the measure will not pass into law in the form under which it leaves the Lords," and, as we are not surprised, we are also by no means disconcerted at the action of the peers.

That part of the Bill which is intended to give relief to the clergy elicited from Lord CAIRNS a speech which ought to, if it does not, prove fatal to the 11th Clause. But this part of the subject, together with the extraordinary muddle into which the framers of the Bill have got, in endeavouring to give legislative effect to the recommendations of Convocation, may be best dealt with separately and hereafter.

## MR. GLADSTONE AND THE OPPOSITION.

THE Opposition are, so far, faithful to the Imperialism which their chief has substituted for the old Toryism, that a section of them, apparently with the sanction of their leader in the House of Commons, are seeking to introduce into our Parliament the tactics pursued by the more fiery BUONAPARTISTS in the French Assembly. MR. O'DONNELL is not, indeed, a recognised chief or even member of the Tory party, but he appears to be a special favourite with the hot-headed country enemies of Mr. GLADSTONE, who are just now making themselves so conspicuous as representatives of the Opposition; and Mr. O'DONNELL strangely reminds us of the CASSAGNACS and DE FELTRES. We do not mean for a moment to insinuate that Mr. O'DONNELL would ever so far forget himself as to propose that the differences of opinion in the House should be settled outside by swords or pistols, but in recklessness of statement, in contempt not only of the laws of debate but of the courtesies which used to be observed in the most excited controversies, in a certain dash and daring which some mistake for courage, but which is really little more than a stolid insensibility to the considerations by which gentlemen are generally governed, there is a striking likeness between the extreme members of Opposition in the two Legislatures. The peculiar feature in the present situation in the House of Commons is the amount of sympathy which this kind of warfare receives from the Tory party, and that not only from the irresponsible Members below the gangway, or even from such ungovernable spirits as SIR DRUMMOND WOLFF, but from so prominent a Member of the late Cabinet, and so intimate a friend of the PREMIER, as LORD JOHN MANNERS, and above all, from SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE himself. We do not wonder at the wild howl of indignation with which the Opposition received SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT'S caustic remarks on the powerful aid which its leader had given to Mr. O'DONNELL. The sting was in its truth, and that truth all the shoutings of the party will be unable to conceal from the English people. It was clearly understood last Monday by SIR J. MOWBRAY, a member of the late Government, by MR. HERMON, an independent Conservative, whose avowed dissent from his chief was a significant fact, and by the Tories who, having a regard to their own character, to the interests of the nation, and to the courtesies of political strife, refused to follow their leader into the division lobby in company with Mr. BIGGAR and Mr. O'DONNELL, and to be "told" by

MR. PARNELL and Mr. O'CONNOR POWER. A more extraordinary spectacle has not been seen in Parliament for many a day, and it is one which is not likely to be forgotten. The members of the late Cabinet are to be congratulated on the distinguished leaders they have found, and on the humility with which they are content to follow them. Three months ago their chief appealed to the constituencies to enable him to save the country from the wicked Liberals, who were ready to connive at a "policy of decomposition!" Now it is SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE, SIR RICHARD CROSS, and the highly-respectable MR. W. H. SMITH who are the allies of Home Rulers, and are ready to screen from condemnation one of the most shameful outrages, not only on freedom of debate, but on the "comity of nations," which even Home Rulers have ever perpetrated. This is the interpretation which the people, including the more respectable of the Tory party, will put upon the action of Monday night, and SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE may yet live to rue the hour when he yielded to the temptation to inflict an injury upon his political opponents without considering the effect it would have upon his own reputation. A "combination of the Conservative tail and the Irish party, acquiesced in, if not encouraged, by the Conservative chiefs," of which, the *Pall Mall Gazette* tells us, this is the "first open sign," may obstruct public business, and possibly prevent the Government from accomplishing all they desire in the present Session, but the mischief it will do to the Conservative party will be irreparable.

MR. GLADSTONE has, undoubtedly, roused his foes to a pitch of fury. He has not only conquered them at the polling-booths, but every week he is giving new proofs that his victory was well deserved, and is consolidating the hold he already has upon the confidence of the country. His budget is a masterpiece of genius. A statesman, of seventy years of age, charged with the responsibility of steering the ship of State out of a shoal of quicksands and difficulties in Europe, Asia, and Africa, he undertakes the additional task of settling a financial problem which has perplexed Chancellors of the Exchequer for half a century or more, and arranges it with a simplicity and a directness which silences criticism. As a party stroke the abolition of the Malt-tax is one of the most effective which could have been played in the political game, and its impression is increased by its unexpectedness, its audacity, and its completeness. The solution may seem extremely simple, now that it is discovered, but so was the discovery of a new Continent, and so are most of the great achievements of genius. SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE had the opportunity of doing what MR. GLADSTONE has now done, and had a surplus of six millions on which to work in doing it, but he wasted his money, and never made the attempt on which his successor has ventured in the face of an actual deficit, and at a time when the revenue is but slowly reviving, if reviving at all. We do not envy the feelings with which he listened to the marvellous exposition of his financial projects with which MR. GLADSTONE fascinated the House of Commons. He could not, indeed, under any conditions, have hoped to rival the matchless eloquence which was able to give such a charm to dry statistics and wearying figures, but the proposals made appeared so obvious and simple, that he must have been mortified at the thought that they had never suggested themselves to him. Abolition of the Malt Tax seemed intended to be the trump card of the Tories, and here it was played by their adversaries. The curious idea of Colonel BARNE that the Ministry had accepted their home, as well as their foreign, policy from their enemies, was as entertaining as the wrath of the new aspirant to Christian statesmanship, MR. CHAPLIN. The Colonel incidentally and accidentally hit upon what must have been the most bitter element in the reflections of his leader. It ought to have been the policy of the late Government, but it was not; and when SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE perceived how easily it could be carried, his feelings must have been the reverse of agreeable. Perhaps it may have dawned upon him that in the preparation of budgets brain is an important element, and that unfortunately for him MR. GLADSTONE had in this respect been more liberally endowed by nature than himself. But it is not in the Budget alone that the extraordinary power of the PRIME MINISTER appears. He has infused his own spirit into his Cabinet, and a new era has commenced in our political life. The contrast between the activity promised for the fragment of a Session, which is all that the Ministry have at command this year, and the indolence and barrenness of the last six years must be anything but satisfactory to the late Ministry and its supporters. *Hinc illa ire!* Hence the disgraceful abuse of the liberty of questioning. Hence the incessant interpellations with the manifest purpose of irritating the PRIME MINISTER. Hence the shameful alliance of SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE with MR. PARNELL and MR. O'DONNELL.



We may be told, indeed, that no one had any sympathy with Mr. O'DONNELL; but what is the value of such protestations when the effect of the action taken was to encourage that gentleman in a procedure which could not fail to place our Ministry in most unpleasant relations to a foreign Power? We would ask those who fancy that Mr. GLADSTONE was too prompt and decided in his action, how he would have been able to meet the just complaints of the French Ministry, if he had allowed the privileges of Parliament to be abused for the purpose of scattering the vilest charges against their accredited ambassador. Even in the fiercest struggles of the late Parliament—as, for example, in that memorable fight over the South African Bill, when Mr. FORSTER and other Members of the Cabinet gave their opponents a support which has been so badly requited—there was no such difficulty as that which Mr. O'DONNELL raised last Monday. In all other cases the conflict was about some point of domestic policy, but here the feelings of another Cabinet, and one with which it is particularly necessary that we should be on good terms, were concerned. The difficulty of the position was enhanced by the fact that Mr. O'DONNELL had no right to speak, and could only be heard by the courtesy of the House. To demand that that courtesy should be extended to him, in order that he might make fresh innuendoes against an absent man, bearing a character which even the most savage nations are accustomed to respect, was surely to ask too much. Yet Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE endorsed the opposition to a resolution which was nothing more than the refusal of a demand which was preposterous, and which could not have been conceded without an insult to our ally. To represent the resolution as an infraction of the liberty of the House was simply bunkum. If, indeed, liberty of speech in the House meant the right of any member to stand up in his place and give vent to his spite in scandalous charges against individuals, which would thus receive a publicity and be invested with an importance they would otherwise never have attained, that liberty is a nuisance which ought to be curtailed, not a privilege that is to be jealously defended. Let the question be judged on the principle of common-sense, and we have no doubt as to the general verdict on Mr. GLADSTONE's conduct. It was a manly endeavour to maintain the dignity of the House, and to put down that lawlessness on the part of a few of its members which has not only been a serious obstruction to public business, but an opprobrium to the character of the Assembly. That Sir STAFFORD NORTHCOTE should have sought to baffle this attempt, and have played into the hands of a clique who find a malignant pleasure in lowering the status of Parliament, will long be remembered to his discredit, and that of a party which was content to sacrifice such permanent reputation and patriotic sentiment for the temporary gratification of miserable spleen.

While bishops and clergy in this country are deprecating the concession to Nonconformists of the logical sequence of religious liberty—the right to inter their dead in the national graveyards with a service consonant to their feelings—through fear that this may be a step towards opening the parish churches to Nonconformist ministers, it is curious to find the Diocesan Synod of Adelaide listening patiently to a suggestion made by a layman, the Hon. H. SCOTT, for facilitating intercommunion between the Church of England and other denominations. He "thought that it would be well if, in return for being allowed to hold services in the churches of other denominations, permission were granted for the use of consecrated churches by orthodox Christian ministers of other denominations at such times as the buildings were not needed for the Church of England service. If they made use of the buildings of other denominations, they should not deny other ministers a similar privilege, and he knew himself that on many occasions, with praiseworthy liberality, the Bishop had conducted service in such places as he had referred to." Archdeacon DOVE, representing the High Church section, declared that "the reason why he could not join with the Protestants—he meant the Nonconforming Dissenters—was that with them there was no priesthood, no altar." The debate had no practical result, but the tone which characterised it would contrast favourably with that of some recent ecclesiastical utterances among us.

Mr. SPURGEON has written an unadvised letter, which a little further consideration of the subject will, we venture to think, incline him to withdraw. Invited to take part in the demonstration to-morrow at Exeter Hall in hostility to the appointment of Lord RIPON as Viceroy of India, he has committed himself to this expression of opinion:—"So long as the Law of Settlement is in force, it seems to be involved in the Protestant succession to the Throne that all Viceroys should be Protestants also. Our predecessors judged from painful experience that Papists would not allow them their liberties if they mounted the Throne, and therefore they excluded them. I do not think that the English people are prepared to remove this safeguard, and, while it remains, it seems clear to me that HER MAJESTY's Viceroys must not be Catholics." A little consideration shows the fallacy of this argument, which, if it holds good for a Viceroy, who is the

representative of HER MAJESTY in India, is equally sustainable for every Lord-lieutenant, Deputy-lieutenant, Justice of the Peace, and Policeman, for they are all representatives of the Sovereign. Mr. SPURGEON is certainly not prepared for a revival of tests for such functionaries. But he shrinks from a step which seems inconsistent with the maintenance of the Law of Settlement, which he is yet unwilling to modify, so as to admit of the Throne being occupied by a Papist. And herein he confounds two matters between which there is a vital distinction, which he has apparently overlooked. The Sovereign holds office for life, and there being no constitutional arrangements for avoidance of the Crown, the nation has a perfect right to prescribe beforehand such conditions—physical, intellectual, moral, or religious—which are held to be essential to the due discharge of the unique trust thus confided. The Viceroy of INDIA holds office on an entirely different tenure. A message flashed along the telegraph-wire from the Home Executive, the representatives of the nation, divests him in a moment of all authority—an indisputable fact which the promoters of the demonstration, we may be quite sure, sufficiently appreciate.

Some very guarded references were made in the Liberation Society Conference by some of the speakers, to the action of the Commissions entrusted with the task of reforming the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The *Pall Mall Gazette* is somewhat more outspoken on a subject, which the writer very justly declares "ought to be a matter of supreme interest to the whole of the educated portion of the English public, for not only are" the Commissioners "determining the character of the higher education for a large majority of the youth of the upper and middle classes, but they are dealing with the magnificent sum of about half a million a-year." It is stated that, while the Oxford Commission has consented to the abolition of clerical restrictions on the headships and fellowships of the large majority of the fifteen colleges, four, including the three wealthiest foundations, have been allowed "to retain, or rather create, a large proportion of clerical fellowships, under the designation of tutorial fellowships, and that one of these colleges, at least, in addition to Christ Church (where the headship is attached to the deanery of the cathedral), has been allowed to retain the clerical restriction on its headship." As no restriction is at present attached to the office of tutor or lecturer as such, it is objected that such a course is suggestive of retrograde action. The same objection is urged against "a curious device" by which, it is declared, "the Commission are endeavouring to replace, to some extent, the clerical head and fellows in some of those colleges where the restrictions have been removed; they propose to constitute a new clerical officer for the purpose of giving 'religious instruction' to members of the Church of England, and to place this officer on the governing body of the college." Restrictions and privileges having been proved by past experience to be "quite as injurious to the interests of the favoured Church as to those of academical education," the writer exhorts "the more tolerant and far-sighted Churchmen" to unite with the friends of religious equality in the support of Mr. ROUNDELL's motion.

There has been an important election in Belgium which has not quite answered the expectations of the Liberals or, rather, anti-Ultramontanes in that country. One half of the Chamber of Deputies had to be renewed on the 8th. As the result of some sixty-six contests the Ministry gained one vote. They hoped to secure Antwerp and its seven seats. But local circumstances were adverse, and the Clericals ousted the only Liberal, and carried all their candidates in that great commercial city. But to their present majority of eleven in the Chamber the Government on Tuesday added two more by gains at the second ballots in Bruges and Namur. The conflict between the Liberals and the Romish hierarchy will, therefore go on—the former having tolerably secure hold of power; the latter, whom the Pope himself has rebuked for intolerance, exercising spiritual terrorism where they can. With the Ultramontanes it is a life and death strife. They have started opposition schools in nearly every commune, and nearly half the population is excommunicated—the clergy refusing absolution and the sacraments to teachers, parents, and pupils who encourage the Communal schools. The ultimate result of such a conflict is sure enough. "The peasant," says M. EMILE DE LAVELEYE, in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, "used to remain outside of political struggles. In consequence of the passionate opposition of the clergy to the new school law, they have been dragged into it, and so the old Catholic faith will be overthrown, even in the country districts, as it was in France by the Revolution."

The Select Committee appointed to inquire into the BRADLAUGH case—or, rather, into the powers of the House of Commons in relation to the matter—has resolved to recommend the House of Commons to admit Mr. BRADLAUGH upon his making an affirmation, leaving him to face the consequences which may follow proceedings against him in a court of law. This will, not unreasonably, throw the onus upon the member for Northampton himself, who has created the difficulty. As the alternative Mr. BRADLAUGH would be obliged to resign his seat, in which case his re-election would be far from certain.

THE *Times* referring to the alterations made in the Burials Bill in committee says:—"The amendments made in the Bill, and the whole of the latter part of the measure, which deals with the changes which are to be introduced in the Burial Service at the discretion or caprice of the clergyman, will call for the most careful attention of the House of Commons, and we may predict that the measure will not pass into law in the form under which it leaves the Lords."

## THE BURIALS BILL IN COMMITTEE.

[BY A SPECTATOR.]

HOUSE OF LORDS, Tuesday Night.

THE interest in the Bill evinced by the public outside, and by the House itself, was little, if at all, less this afternoon than it has been on the previous stages of the measure. There was, again, an unusual number of "strangers" in the gallery, and in the House the attendance was large, though not crowded; the Episcopal bench, however, was again full.

Considering the strong feeling of the clergy on the subject, the small number of petitions against the Bill presented at the outset of the proceedings was rather remarkable, although the most was made of such as there were by their being entrusted to prominent members of the House—Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Salisbury, and the Archbishop of York all joining in this preliminary demonstration. On the motion that the Lord Chancellor should leave the chair that the House might go into Committee on the Bill, Lord Nelson and the Bishop of Carlisle each had something to say—the Bishop pleading that, whatever might happen to the Bill, there would now be a stop to the flow of liberality which had hitherto provided them in the country parishes with additional land for the enlargement of the churchyards whenever necessary, and asking the Lord Chancellor what, under the circumstances, they were to do to meet the sanitary difficulty which would thus arise. A few words from the Lord Chancellor, intimating that he did not share the fears of the Bishop, sufficed to dispose of this matter; but then, from the front bench below the gangway on the Conservative side of the House, Lord Forbes arose with a formidable bundle of notes in his hand to continue what began to seem like a premeditated scheme for delay, by arguing that the Bill should be sent to a select committee. It looked the more suspicious, too, when this obscure and irresponsible peer began with an intimation that he did not often trouble their lordships, and then straightway trotted out the Liberation Society and Mr. Beresford Hope's well-worn quotation from Dr. Landels. But it is due to their lordships to say that they gave no sort of countenance to this proceeding. Nobody seemed to listen: Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury very literally had their heads together all the time, evidently enjoying some much more hilarious topic than that of the Burials Bill; and Lord Forbes, seeing that the House was out of sympathy with him, speedily collapsed amidst dead silence. Then, without a word of reply, the Chancellor left the woolsack and took his place beside Lord Granville, Lord Redesdale took his place at the cross table as Chairman of Committees, and the House at last was in Committee.

It was clear, from the attitude of the House during this little preliminary discussion, that it meant "business," and was not disposed to tolerate any needless delay, and, once in Committee, it went to work with a will. It will be unnecessary to deal here with the slight verbal amendments introduced by the Lord Chancellor and others more for the purpose of putting into shape the phraseology of the Bill. But Clause I brought up two matters of great importance. First came the Earl of Mount Edgecumbe with the proposition that the Bill should not apply to any churchyard where there is a cemetery with unconsecrated ground, and should cease to apply to any place when such a cemetery should be provided. This he supported in a brief speech of unexceptionable tone, mainly on the ground that for the Bill to pass in its original shape would greatly intensify the grievance which the clergy alleged it would inflict upon them. The Lord Chancellor declined to accept the proposed amendment, which would draw a line between parish and parish throughout the country, and perpetuate the controversy which the Bill aimed to close. The argument was clearly put, but it was urged with no great force or earnestness, and it gave the first indication of a too ready acquiescence in the mutilation of the Bill. No wonder that the Archbishop of York and Lord Nelson still pleaded for the amendment, and that despite the hope expressed by Lord Kimberley that the House would not perpetuate the grievances of the Dissenters, the amendment was carried. The division, being the first taken, and on a test question, was watched from all galleries with great interest; while Sir R. Cross, Mr. Beresford Hope, and a crowd of Members of the House of Commons, looked on from the front of the Throne. The majority of the Bishops, it was soon seen, were going with the Archbishop of York; but the Archbishop of Canterbury turned in to the opposite lobby, and, followed by the Bishops of Exeter and Oxford, and three other Bishops, voted with the Government. When the numbers were announced—"contents," that is for the amendment, 130; "non-contents," 106—there was no sort of exultation on the Conservative benches; not a single cheer was raised, and it is not improbable that the more sagacious of the peers full well understood that this was one of the things done that would very soon have to be undone.

Lord Strathnairn now comes to the table, to plead for the exclusion from the benefits of the Bill of any person who shall, by word of mouth or in writing, publicly declare that he does not believe in God. In a few words, the Lord Chancellor points out that the only effect of the clause would be to give such persons burial with the full Burial Service of the Church, and the absurdity of the proposal of the venerable but not over-wise peer is at once seen. The proposal is rejected, and then the Archbishop of York steps forward to strike out the cemeteries from the operation of the Bill. Not much is said—for, practically, the discussion on Lord Mount Edgecumbe's amendment covered the same ground. The Lord Chancellor



objects, and points out that this provision in the Bill is matched by a corresponding concession to Churchmen, giving the clergy the right to officiate in the unconsecrated parts of cemeteries. But again there is no earnestness or resolution—no sort of intimation to the House how serious a modification the proposed amendment makes in the Bill; and, after a few words from Lord Fortescue in support of the amendment, the House again divides, and again the Government are beaten. The amendment is carried by a majority of nineteen—127 to 108—and one of the main provisions of the Bill is gone.

Matters begin to look serious, and now Lord Salisbury, evidently well pleased with what has already been done, rises to make another assault upon the proposals of the Government. Up to this time the debate has been tame and dull; and has been carried on amidst a good deal of conversation, which has evoked several calls of "Order." But now the House, which has become crowded very perceptibly, gives signs that it is settling itself down for serious work. And Lord Salisbury lends himself to the prevailing impression by at once pouring out a glass of water, and putting himself in position as if for a great speech. "Hitherto," he begins, "the House has been dealing with the ancient churchyards, the Church's title to which is undoubtedly strong, as it rests upon the possession of centuries. But he now wished to direct attention to the churchyards, the title of the Church to which was also strong; as they were held by the will of the donors who still lived, or were recently dead, and whose wishes were perfectly well known." These introductory sentences were not delivered without many breaks and some hesitation, and it began to be doubtful whether, after all, any great effort—any determined attack upon the Bill—was forthcoming. In another minute Lord Salisbury had hold of the famous "Protest of Recent Donors," which has so often done duty in these discussions, and ingeniously coupling it with the deed of conveyance in the Church Building Act of 1823, he built up his contention that to allow the application of the Bill to recent churchyards, would be defrauding the donors, and violating the sacredness of endowments. The noble lord warmed with his subject, and gave some portions of his speech with an energy which was responded to by hearty cheers from the Conservative benches. But the speech was wholly free from the specially characteristic qualities of Lord Salisbury's great efforts, and it was delivered with a moderation of manner which seemed to intimate that the speaker was not anxious to push matters to an extremity. He concluded by moving that the Bill should not apply to any burial-ground given as a free gift within the last sixty years, without consent of the donor.

Lord Selborne replied with admirable effect; and feeling, no doubt, that the Bill had been damaged enough already, braced himself up to prevent any further mutilation of it. The Bill, he said, proposed neither alienation nor spoliation of recent gifts and endowments: it was simply a regulation of the manner in which they should be used, and such a regulation as, on every principle, moral as well as legal, it was within the competency of Parliament to make. And then came some sentences as to what is involved in giving land to the Church of England, which the Liberation Society might very well publish in one of their tracts on Church property. "It would be fatal to sound principles," said his lordship, "if the House should sanction the doctrine that those who give out and out, for public purposes, land which was once private property, should reserve to themselves the right of dictating to Parliament how such public purposes should be regulated or modified." He proceeded to apply the argument of Lord Salisbury to the case of gifts of public parks, of the endowment of churches, and contended that Parliament not only never had accepted gifts under such limitations, but that it was one of the duties of Parliament to refuse gifts hampered with such restrictions. The energy and force with which the Chancellor spoke left nothing to be desired. It evidently cowed Lord Salisbury, and impressed the House. The Archbishop of York made a feeble attempt to break the force of the Lord Chancellor's arguments, and then Lord Brabourne, amidst some signs of impatience from the House, which were encouraged by the ostentatious inattention of the Conservative leaders, supported the Bill as it stood. Meeting an outburst of calls for the division, he reminded the House that there was a good deal more feeling on the subject outside the House than their lordships seemed to be aware of, and he very earnestly counselled them not to accept the amendment. The noble marquis was a recognised champion of the Church, but he thought the Church often suffered more from the action of its recognised champions, than from that of its open enemies.

And now the House again prepares for a division. As soon as the two parties begin to move along the floor to the lobbies, evidence is at once seen of the effect of the earnest defence of the Bill. The Archbishop of York, of course, again goes wrong; but the Archbishop of Canterbury, still faithful to the Bill, now leads a full half of the Episcopal bench, if not more, into the lobby against the amendment. As the peers file back into their places, it is seen that the division has been a better one for the Government, and presently Lord Redesdale blurts out the numbers—91 for the amendment; against, 104. There is a shuffle of satisfaction rather than a cheer on the Liberal benches, and henceforth there are to be no divisions—the neck of the opposition has been broken. A good many of the Conservative peers seem to have known what was coming; for they do not again appear in the House. It is the "dinner hour," it is true, and that may be the reason why Lord Beaconsfield, and so many of his discomfited followers, do not return to their places.

In Clause 3 the Lord Chancellor proposes an amendment, to prohibit funerals under the Bill on Sunday,

Good Friday, and Christmas-day, and that leads to an edifying discussion on the relative sanctity of the holy-days of the Church. Lord Templetown, the Duke of Richmond, and the Bishop of Lincoln are seriously concerned that Ascension Day is not also included, and a peer on the back benches on the Conservative side is of opinion that Ash Wednesday is also "a very solemn day." But this somewhat disturbs the gravity of the House, and settles the question. On Clause 6, Lord Houghton puts in a plea for the permission of Jewish funerals, but the Lord Chancellor says they are bound to draw the line at Christian burial, and that there is no grievance in this case, as the Jews always prefer their own burial grounds. The amendment is, therefore, negatived. The Lord Chancellor next moves his amendment defining what is meant by "Christian" services. It is to mean "every religious service used by any Church, denomination, or person professing to be Christian." This leads to some rather sharp criticism, in the course of which Lord Salisbury gives us the only bit of his real self which we had throughout the debate, by saying, in effect, that the definition defined nothing, and that the word was put into the Bill for appearance's sake only, without being intended to serve any real purpose. But the climax was reached by Lord Salford, who, from a back bench on the Conservative side, wished to ask a question on a point which had been quite overlooked. "It is this," said the noble lord, "What is the difference, in relation to the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, between a Mohammedan and a Unitarian?" The response was not encouraging to such questions; it evoked a burst of laughter!

The Bishop of Winchester next tries his hand in improving the Bill, by proposing that the services to be permitted under it shall not last "more than thirty minutes." The Bishop of Oxford said that some such limit was necessary, as, the longer services were protracted, the more risk there would be of collision. Lord Waverley, from the Liberal side of the House, strongly opposed any such limitation, but Lord Hardwick, from the other side, thought it absolutely necessary, and would place a regulative power in all such matters in the hands of the incumbent of the parish. The Bishop of Carlisle thought the last suggestion most unfortunate. If it were adopted, it would place the clergyman in a most invidious position, and impose upon him a burden that would be almost intolerable. They had been told they would have under the Bill all kinds of services, and possibly women taking part in them, and he should like to know how the clergyman, or even one of his right rev. brethren, or the whole bench of bishops together, could stop a woman! The bishop had his reward; the House laughed aloud, and after a word from the Archbishop of York the proposal was withdrawn.

And now we come to the liveliest incident in the entire debate. Lord Cairns had been sitting quietly in his place throughout the evening, scarcely taking any part in the proceedings; but now his turn was come. The Lord Chancellor had proposed an addition to Clause 10, giving the relatives of any deceased person the right to have the services of any minister of the Church of England who may be willing to perform a burial service in an unconsecrated part of any cemetery, without risk of censure or penalty; and then Clause 11, dealing with certain recommendations of Convocation on the subject of an altered service, was called by the chairman. At once Lord Cairns rose, and in firm and decided language, amidst the breathless silence of the House, pointed out certain grave objections to the course proposed in the Bill. He appealed to the Lord Chancellor whether, in the whole history of Parliament, any such proposal had ever before been made, and he strongly pressed that before the Bill reached a further stage the subject should be most carefully considered. The noble lord spoke throughout as if conscious that he had hit a serious blot in the Bill, and, amidst the cheers of the few members on his own side of the House, he sat down with the air of a man who has given his antagonist a poser. The two Archbishops were evidently alarmed, lest the relief to the clergy proposed in the assailed clause should be lost. Dr. Thompson first tried to break the force of the legal objection, but a shake of Lord Cairns' head warned him from that ground, and then he declaimed rather wildly on the general question of the need of relief to the clergy. Dr. Tait more prudently referred to what had been done in the Lectorial Bill and the Occasional Services Bill as precisely analogous to what was now proposed, and he appealed to Lord Cairns to help them out of the difficulty, if there was one. The Lord Chancellor had been sitting throughout this episode looking hard at the Bill, and very much with the air of a man who has really been caught tripping. But, now, after a word from Lord Cairns in reply to the Archbishop's, he advances to the table, and, holding himself well up, he launches his reply practically in a single sentence. "The criticisms of the noble and learned lord," he says, "are purely technical, more than that, they are super-hyper, extra technical;" and he heaps up the little pile of adjectives with such emphasis and energy that Lord Cairns' speech seems blown to the winds in a moment. But the Lord Chancellor goes on to make good his contention, and instances the Acts referred to by the Archbishop of Canterbury as absolutely proving and demonstrating the perfect regularity of the proposals of the Bill. He concludes as he began, by affirming that the objections of Lord Cairns were purely technical, and had no substance in them whatever. The House seemed heartily to enjoy this little encounter, and heartily cheered the Lord Chancellor as he resumed his seat.

Practically this finished the work in committee, and Lord Redesdale, who with the Lord Chancellor and many of the bishops had been in the House continuously from five o'clock until now close upon half-past ten, seemed heartily glad the work was over. At one time, indeed, the chairman, in his anxiety to get the work over, galloped the clauses along at such a rate that

the Archbishop of York was not quick enough for him, and missed his chance of proposing an amendment until too late, the clause having been passed before the Archbishop was aware of it. Altogether, the work of the House of Lords, judged, at any rate, by its procedure this evening, does not impress one favourably. Their lordships hardly seem to have an adequate sense of responsibility, and go through their business as if they had themselves the conviction that it was more a pretence than a reality, and that the real work of legislation was done elsewhere.

#### EUROPEAN ARMAMENTS.—MR. RICHARD'S MOTION.

IN the House of Commons, on Tuesday night, at the commencement of the sitting, a large number of petitions were presented in favour of the reduction of European armaments. After the questions had been disposed of,

Mr. RICHARD rose to move,

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that she will be graciously pleased to instruct her Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to enter into communication with other Powers with a view to bring about a mutual and simultaneous reduction of European armaments.

The hon. member said this was not a question of party, but a question of humanity. He was suspected of belonging to what was called the "Peace-at-any-Price Party." What that really meant he did not know. It was one of those vague terms of reproach with which it was found convenient to slight a political adversary when something more precise and more pertinent was not available for the purpose. He should not ask the House to assent to anything which the most devout believer in the right of war might not consistently support. All, he presumed, would agree that the armed condition of Europe had grown to such enormous dimensions that it was scarcely possible to use exaggerated language with regard to it. (Hear.) We all felt that this state of things was an affront to reason, a scandal to civilisation, a scourge upon humanity, and, above all, a reproach to that holy religion of peace which the nations of Christendom professed to accept and reverence. The new edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," under the word "Europe," contained certain statements founded on elaborate statistical calculations, which went to show that between 1850 and 1874 there had been an addition to the armed forces of Europe of nearly 2,000,000 of men. Not long ago Lord Derby expressed his belief that there were 10,000,000 men trained to arms in Europe, and the Times about the same period spoke of 12,000,000 men. In these estimates, of course, all the reserves were taken into account. It would be no exaggeration to say, however, that at any moment 4,000,000 men might be found under arms in Europe. It was obvious that the cost of such enormous armies was necessarily very great. A French statistician had estimated the total at £500,000,000 annually, a sum which included three items, of which the first was the actual amount extracted for warlike purposes by means of taxation; the second, the loss occasioned by the withdrawal of so many men from industrial pursuits; and the third, the sum lost by the non-productive employment of capital on warlike implements. In order to raise the large sum annually required, the future was mortgaged for the sake of the present, and the total debts of the several European countries had increased within a few years from £2,626,000,000 to £4,324,000,000. An annual increase of £131,000,000 had been caused by wars and apprehension of wars. In short, it appeared to be an accepted principle of European statesmen that nations could not exist side by side without threatening one another with displays of armed force. That doctrine was universally acted upon on the Continent, where in most of the States every able-bodied man, with trifling exceptions, was liable to military service. What, he might ask, was the result of that system? It was clear to him that it wholly failed to accomplish its object, and that the nations of Europe, in return for their excessive military burdens, were not in the enjoyment of peace and security. He denounced the maxim, "*Si vis pacem, para bellum*," as a mere excuse for war, and held that the vast standing armies of the present day provoked rather than prevented a conflict. (Hear, hear.) Seeing, then, that the very objects for which armies were maintained were now as far as ever from accomplishment, the disasters consequent on militarism might be considered. One bad result was that the finances of every great State of Europe were more or less embarrassed by the burdens of war. In the eight years from 1870 to 1877 inclusive, the accumulated deficits of Austro-Hungary amounted to £33,000,000; and in France, from 1848 to 1869, the accumulated deficits were as much as £100,000,000. In Germany, at the present moment, the expenditure was increasing, while the revenue was growing less, in spite of the French war indemnity; and the consequence was that protective duties had had to be imposed on many articles of commerce. Lord Salisbury, in an able speech delivered before the Chamber of Commerce in Manchester, drew attention to the permanent drain which these gigantic armaments imposed on the industry of nations and the danger which they involved. Italy, that young nationality to which the sympathy of all was so strongly drawn, had her debt increased in consequence of this system from £97,000,000 in 1860 to £400,000,000 in 1873. The result of these excessive armaments was that in all the countries of Europe thousands and tens of thousands of people were sunk in poverty, misery, and ignorance. Now, the question he wished to ask the House was this—Could nothing be done to put some check upon this system? Of the magnitude of the evil there were no two opinions. Even the statesmen who most actively promoted the system declared that they did so with regret; and the more thoughtful military men, while deeming it unavoidable, joined in lamenting the necessity. All the leading statesmen of Europe had given their testimony in the same direction. He had quoted the words of Lord Salisbury; he might quote equally emphatic words from Lord Derby, from the Prime Minister when he spoke of "the chimera of militarism," and numberless passages from the speeches of the right hon. gentleman the member for Birmingham. All the journals of the country were constantly denouncing this state of things, but he would content himself by reading one sentence from an article



which appeared in the *Times* a little while ago: "If such a state of things," said the *Times*, "is permitted to continue, it will be a disgrace to European statesmen. It is upon their shoulders the real blame will rest." Was what he proposed, therefore, impracticable—that the different Governments should come to an understanding with a view to a mutual and simultaneous diminution of their armaments. Having cited the authority of Sir R. Peel and Lord Beaconsfield in favour of the reduction of armaments, the hon. gentleman said that in 1817 a convention was agreed upon between Great Britain and the United States as to the number of armed boats they would keep on the American lakes. That was not a matter of small moment, for the greatest importance was attached by the Duke of Wellington to naval supremacy on those lakes. The number of armed boats agreed upon was four or five; but the effect of the limitation was that the spirit of jealousy and rivalry became doomed, and we ceased to have any armed boats on those lakes. (Hear.) Mr. Cobden, in 1851, brought forward a motion in that House, expressed in much the same language as he had himself adopted, proposing mutual disarmament between England and France. He was answered by Lord Palmerston in a complimentary speech, and the noble lord said he adopted the tone and the language of the hon. gentleman, though he did not like to be bound by the motion. The next movement was made by the Emperor of the French, who asked had not prejudices and rancours divided nations long enough, and were they still to maintain mutual distrust by exaggerated armaments? Unhappily, our Government alone of all the Governments of Europe peremptorily refused to entertain the proposal of the Emperor, although Lord Derby said that if there was a country in Europe which had less interest than another in sending a blank refusal that country was England. (Hear.) In 1869 he paid a visit to various capitals of Europe; he put himself in communication with the members of different representative assemblies to see whether they could not promote some concerted action in this matter, and he found many of the leading politicians well disposed to entertain his proposals. It might be said there were difficulties in the way, but no great service had ever been accomplished for humanity that did not encounter and overcome difficulties. (Hear, hear.) He could not see why, if the various States of Europe could pursue this process of emulation to increase their armaments, they could not, in common-sense, join in reversing that process. (Hear, hear.) He could not but think that the present time was favourable for such an effort as this. The nations enjoyed an interval of peace, and there seemed no present danger of a breach of that peace, except by the existence of those enormous armaments. All the peoples of Europe were groaning under the burdens occasioned by this military system. They would hail with gladness and gratitude any proposal of the kind. He could not but think that the Governments themselves would hail such a proposal. There were ominous signs around them. The people, oppressed by these armaments, were driven by desperation into treasonable conspiracies, and society was threatened by Social and Nihilist combinations. While sovereigns were congratulating themselves on safety from assassination, it was surely time that means were taken to relieve the burdens of the people rather than drive them into such extremities by adding constantly to their armaments. The reduction of those armaments would liberate a great mass of capital; it would help to establish peace on sure and solid foundations. He would venture, in conclusion, to make an earnest and respectful appeal to the right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. He hoped he would not turn aside from a great question like this. The task to which he invited him was not unworthy of his transcendent abilities. (Cheers.) It was not unworthy of his high character as the passionate friend of justice and humanity. He had already won many laurels by great deeds of practical statesmanship, and a greater than any of them awaited his hand. No greener wreath ever surrounded any man's brow than that which would encircle his if he would only consent to grapple with this high argument, and endeavour to bring the various nations of Europe into general concert to reduce those armaments. Above all, he would earn the grateful benedictions of the peoples who were now groaning under this baneful system of militarism. (Cheers.)

Mr. BAXTER was glad, whatever the issue of this motion might be, that it had afforded to his hon. friend an opportunity of delivering one of his terse and telling speeches in favour of the good cause he had so much at heart to a far more sympathetic audience than he had ever addressed before. He recollected the time when a motion of this kind and sentiments such as he had uttered would have been received with derision, but fortunately the last General Election had added very largely to the number of gentlemen in that House who sympathised with those opinions, and, however distant they might be from the time of universal peace and the abolition of those armaments to which his hon. friend referred, he might congratulate him on the undoubted fact that the cause was steadily making progress. It had been his fortune of late to travel extensively in various countries of Europe, and if there was one thing that struck him more than another, it was the deplorable result of this military system. It almost seemed as if civilisation were not advancing; certainly it was a kind of reflection on our common Christianity. In Italy, in France, and in South Russia, the spirit of militarism was the same. There was no class of people in this country so largely blameable in this matter as what was called Society. Society, he contended, was constantly causing panics and inventing hobgoblins with which to terrify the community in order to increase the national expenditure. He recollected the time when a large portion of the nation went crazy about the prospect of a French invasion, but now every one was ashamed of the suspicion thus entertained of a friendly nation. There were not wanting people at the close of the American war to say that the Canadian frontier would soon be menaced, and that Jamaica would be annexed. Well, the French and the Americans were now our best friends, and so would be the Russians when the deplorable game of having a natural enemy should be played out. (Hear, hear.) He maintained that the verdict of the nation at the recent elections was against the spirit of militarism. One reason why the present was a favourable time for such a motion as had been made was the fact of our having now got quit of nearly everything in the unfortunate treaty of 1815—a treaty entirely devised in the interests of kings, princes, and dukes, who were all to be provided for without the slightest reference to the feelings or wishes of their subjects. He rejoiced to witness the development of two likely sources of sustained peace—namely, the spreading of the principle of nationalities, exemplified in the unification of Germany, and the firm establishment

of a peaceful and peace-loving Republican Government in France. (Hear, hear.) Then there was the recognition of the principle of national arbitration from which the lovers of peace could draw encouragement, and which had received such practical illustration in the settlement of the *Alabama* claims. The right hon. gentleman at the head of the Government had shown himself to be, above all things, a man of peace, and whatever might happen to the particular motion before the House—he cared very little for that—he should indeed be surprised if the foreign policy of the right hon. gentleman were not shaped in the future in the spirit of the motion of his hon. friend. (Hear, hear.)

Colonel BURNABY testified that war was deplored by every sensible military man. He admitted that the armaments of Europe were too great, but urged that under present circumstances our own forces were as small as they could be with safety.

Mr. GLADSTONE drew a distinction between the basis of the motion in certain opinions and the adoption of the motion at the present moment, the effect of which would be not only to indicate a particular course as desirable, but to indicate that course in such a manner as to commit the House to a statement that the moment had arrived for taking the step described in the motion. On that subject he would presently state his reasons for being obliged to act and speak with some reserve. The speech of his hon. friend the member for Merthyr Tydvil commanded, he need hardly say, his fullest concurrence. (Hear, hear.) His hon. friend the mover had quoted from him one very strong expression made on a former occasion, not, he was sure, with the idea of catching him in a trap by reference to a former speech, but with the fullest knowledge that he was expressing opinions that were permanently rooted in his (Mr. Gladstone's) mind. He had used the phrase, which he well recollected, in endeavouring to describe the spirit which appeared to have taken possession of Europe as a "demon of militarism." He must, however, take certain reserves, and point out to his hon. friend that great operations had been accomplished in Europe in the course of the last thirty years by the sad and painful and deplorable, but the sometimes necessary means of war, and that the results of those operations had been favourable to the permanent happiness of mankind. He would not speak of the Crimean war, though he did not agree in the censure his hon. friend had passed upon it. But when he considered such an operation as the creation of a national and united Italy, in the view of a number of sectional fragments of people among whom violence and corruption were habitually used in large parts of the country to keep down the spirit of freedom and the sentiment of nationality, and to extinguish the glorious traditions of the race, it had not been, he was sorry to say, by peaceful means that that great change had been brought about. In the same way, the reconstruction of Germany, however it came, they ought to regard as a great advance in the political arrangement of Europe. Nor could he refrain from saying that when he recollected that within the last two years from 10,000,000 to 15,000,000 of people had attained a new position, and had made a great advance on the road from the most debasing servitude to the fulness of freedom through the means of war, though he joined with his hon. friend in everything he had said as to the deplorable character of war, yet he could not travel with him to such an extent as to say that those wars, wars for liberty, were to be regarded as unmixed evils. As to wars of conquest, dynastic wars, wars of aggrandisement, needless wars, wanton wars—and he was sorry to say that they had not to go far to find such—(hear, hear)—there were no words his hon. friend could devise, which the wit of man could invent, that were strong enough to describe either the folly or the guilt of them. There was a real distinction which might be drawn between wars made for lawful purposes and carried through with benefit to mankind, and on the other hand, that prevalence both of the disposition to war and of the actual making of war, which had no such justification, and which were to be regarded as the encouragement of unmixed evils and of the most terrible plague that could affect humanity. His hon. friend had placed the cost of past wars and of the preparation of future wars at £500,000,000 a year in Europe. He wished he was able to reduce that estimate, but he could not. They must also remember that the consequence of withdrawal from fruitful industry to military purposes of the mind and the hand of men was that they likewise withdrew them from the business of production. What he wished to point out was that, as a general rule, the wars which had led to the creation of national debts, and which had been chiefly dynastic or religious or reactionary wars, had almost all been wrong and unjust. His hon. friend was right in saying that under many circumstances war interests were created in the respective countries by the extraordinary expenditure on the system of militarism. His hon. friend had quoted the Cape of Good Hope, than which probably a fairer or better instance could not have been quoted, and he must observe that of all things that were pestilent and mischievous both to political character and to the formation of religious civilisation, nothing could be so ruinous to a country as to be in a position to provoke wars without being called upon to pay for them. (Cheers.) It was most singular to go back thirty or forty years, to the time of Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Cobden, when they found that Mr. Cobden in a very marked degree, and Sir Robert Peel in a degree less marked, but with no less sincerity, were even then deploring the enormous scale, as they thought, of the military establishments of Europe, and of the tendency of those establishments not to preserve peace, but to weaken the securities of peace. Since that period—since Sir Robert Peel thought it his duty in his place in Parliament to call attention to the dangers which menaced Europe through the maintenance of needless establishments—they had had those establishments in some cases doubled, in some cases trebled. They had the sad plague-spot, as it might be called, upon them, and, as his hon. friend said, they deluded themselves with the notion that they were still clinging to that idle and empty formula, so misused and misdirected, that to be prepared for war was the best way to preserve peace. His hon. friend had said, and said with perfect truth, that at one time an endeavour was made—it was only a slight endeavour, but it was not the fault of those who made it that it was so slight—by Lord Clarendon, in conjunction with the Government of which he (Mr. Gladstone) had the honour to be the head in 1869, to set in motion if they could some small measure at least to be a beginning of disarmament. It was not an attempt to combine all the nations of Europe for that purpose. Lord Clarendon believed, and he (Mr. Gladstone) still shared that belief, that were they to gather the plenipotentiaries of Europe round a table at that moment for the purpose of a discussion upon disarmament, their meeting would end in no positive and substantial result.

(Hear, hear.) The only way was to take advantage of some occasion in which particular countries were arming against each other, burdening their own people, exhausting their resources, and endangering the peace of Europe, to endeavour to prevail upon them, relatively to those circumstances, to pursue a course more rational. Lord Clarendon was apprehensive in 1869 of those difficulties with respect to which his prognostications were but too speedily and surely verified. He thought that the state of things which prevailed between France and Germany was menacing to Europe, and he endeavoured to prevail on those countries to begin some small measure of disarmament. The French Government adopted the first form of his proposal to the extent that they offered to make a reduction in their army of 10,000 men. It was not a large reduction, but it was a reduction. On the other hand, the Government of Germany stated that the force they had under arms was smaller in proportion to their population than the force of France, and consequently they could not undertake to make any reduction. He called upon his hon. friend to notice that the effort made in 1869 was not forced upon the Government by any Parliamentary movement. It was made by them spontaneously and from a desire, if possible, to make some progress, however small, towards the beginning of an undertaking which, if it had been made and had acquired considerable development, would have been of inestimable benefit. It was on that ground that he asked his hon. friend not to compel him to vote upon his motion. What he would say to his hon. friend was this. If he had reason to suspect a want of inclination on the part of the Government to move in the direction of promoting peace and pacific measures, in the reduction of armaments, then he would be perfectly justified, whatever their general political relations might be, in striving to force the motion upon them; but if he really believed that they were associated with him in the desire he entertained, then he (Mr. Gladstone) would ask his hon. friend to allow them some discretion in regard to the time and circumstances of their action. The fact of addressing other Powers upon the question was a very serious step. When Lord Clarendon made the effort he had referred to, he was not aware that there was anything on their policy in any quarter of the globe which at all weakened their position or rendered it otherwise than desirable to be the authors of such overtures, and that was an essential point. It was necessary that they should stand *recti in curia*. It was necessary that they should not be liable to the demand, "What are you doing yourselves, you, the preachers of the gospel of peace? Are your hands free from the stain of blood? Have you purged yourselves effectually of that stain?" He need not enter into particulars; it was not necessary, for every one would understand the allusion he made. They must have some regard to the situation in which they were able to place themselves before they undertook the lofty, and, under certain circumstances, the pretentious office of instructing other countries. There were three distinct modes by which, short of application to other Powers, the Government might walk in the direction indicated by his hon. friend. The first and most essential was that they should pursue a foreign policy of peace and justice—(cheers)—for without that, any words they might use would be a bitter mockery in the estimation of others, and might come back upon them hereafter. In the second place, they should study to the best of their ability what they could honestly call moderation in regard to their defensive establishment. That was a subject upon which the Government were not yet prepared to make any definite announcement; and, of course, when he spoke of moderate establishments, he meant the moderation of a just proportion between the real demands of the country for its honour and its safety and the amount that would be required from Parliament and the people in order to maintain those essential points. There was a third way in which it was in the power of the Government to qualify itself for becoming the missionary of those beneficial purposes that were contemplated by his hon. friend, and that was by showing itself disposed, when it was engaged in a controversy, to adopt those amicable and pacific means of escape from their disputes rather than to resort to war. Need he assure his hon. friend and his right hon. friend (Mr. Bright) that the dispositions that led them to become parties to the arbitration of the *Alabama* case were still with them the same as ever; that they were not discouraged, that they were not daunted in the exercise of those feelings by the fact that they were amerced, and severely amerced, by the sentence of an international tribunal? Though they might think the sentence harsh in its extent and unjust in its basis, yet they regarded the fine imposed as dust in the balance compared with the moral value of the example which was set when those two great nations of England and America, among the most fiery and jealous in the world with regard to anything that touched national honour, went in peace and concord before a judicial tribunal to dispose of those painful differences, rather than resort to the arbitrament of the sword. In 1840 Mr. Cobden moved a resolution very closely corresponding with that before the House. Mr. Cobden had in view something like a general disarmament, and Lord Palmerston expressed his great admiration of Mr. Cobden's sentiment, and that conviction he (Mr. Gladstone) entirely shared, that a discussion of that kind was not to be viewed with jealousy and grudging, but as highly beneficial. (Hear, hear.) Lord Palmerston moved the previous question in order that he might not negative Mr. Cobden's motion. Mr. Cobden, however, felt it necessary to go to a division. In 1851 Mr. Cobden, in substance, renewed his motion; but it had a more specific application, as it referred only to the relations between England and France. Lord Palmerston, speaking on that motion, said that the sentiments of it did honour to their author and to the country in which they were proclaimed, and that he did not oppose the motion because he was opposed to the end in view, and because he objected to going into a negotiation bound and fettered, and he thought the end of Mr. Cobden would be more accelerated by the sentiments which he and others had expressed than it would be by the specific motion which he had brought forward. Lord Palmerston said, "We, the Government, feel as ardently on the subject as any man can do, that as far as our influence, power, and persuasion extend, we should use every effort in our power to avert the miseries and calamities of war." Mr. Cobden expressed himself satisfied, and withdrew his motion. He (Mr. Gladstone) hoped that that course might be taken by his hon. friend on the present occasion. It was not desirable that under present circumstances the House should place the Govern-



ment in a position in which they would be compelled either to seem to slight the great authority of the House, or would be driven at a time which they did not think opportune to make overtures to the other Powers of the world, under circumstances and at a moment when they could not anticipate beneficial results from such a course. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. LUTHER STANLEY said that though he supported the motion, he would agree in any course which his hon. friend might take with regard to it. He felt that there was great force in the Prime Minister's remarks that it was more easy to teach by example than by precept. He believed that the present armed state of Europe and the antagonism of nations was a natural outcome of the political conditions which had prevailed, and of the severance of peoples having common affinities. He thought it would be much if in the tangled web of our policy the Government could support retrenchment, and when we had washed our hands of the guilt which was upon them we might speak a word of counsel that would be of advantage to Europe.

Mr. COURTNEY said he could not support an abstract condemnation of the employment of force, and he would move as an amendment,

That, in the opinion of this House, it is the duty of Her Majesty's Government, on all occasions when circumstances admit of it, to recommend to foreign Governments a reduction of European armaments.

Mr. W. FOWLER seconded the amendment.

Mr. GLADSTONE said, he should rather acquiesce than concur in it, as he was not friendly as a general rule to the assertion by the House of Commons of propositions which were not susceptible of immediate application to practice. But he would not take any step, even by moving the previous question, to prevent the adoption of the amendment if it were the general wish of the House to adopt it. On the general ground he had stated he should not, however, have recommended it.

Mr. RICHARD expressed the extreme satisfaction with which he had listened to the speech of the Prime Minister, which would no doubt have a salutary effect throughout Europe, and the world. He would withdraw his motion, but it would be very gratifying if the Prime Minister would allow the amendment to be passed without a division.

The motion was then negatived, and the amendment was agreed to.

### SCOTTISH NOTES.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

I AM not going to write a letter, but as you may be interested to know how far things have settled down after the swell of the Assemblies, I send a note.

You are right in your supposition that the notable volume of "Scotch Sermons," recently published, will not be allowed to circulate unchallenged. It may contain, in the opinion of many critics, the best doctrine in the world, but upon one point there can be no possible doubt—that the position it takes up in relation to the burning question of the hour is not that of the Confession of Faith. There will be considerable difficulty felt in bringing any of the writers to book. The rôle of a religious prosecutor is in these times most unpopular. The man who attempts to play it must lay his account with being scouted as ignorant, and narrow, and behind the age; and, as all the world knows, most of us would prefer being branded as clever knaves to being classed contemptuously among well-meaning fools. Nevertheless, there are men among the laity who seem prepared to bell the cat, and when once a process is fairly started, there are many who must sustain it out of sheer consistency. It is said that more than one conference has been held on the subject since the Assembly, and we wait to see where the mine will be sprung.

As to the Smith business, it is unfortunate that so many on both sides are refusing to let well alone. Dr. Kennedy, of Dingwall, who is dumb in the Assembly, gets his voice again the moment he stands on his native heath, and he has been anathematising the ecclesiastical powers that be, all round. The Free Church is now about as bad as can be, but the United Presbyterian Church is worse, and the Established Church is worse still; and he is going to stay where he is, simply because to jump out of the frying-pan would be to precipitate himself into the fire. He did not vote for Sir Henry Moncreiff's motion, not because he wished Professor Smith retained in the chair, but because he wished a worse thing to come to him. He wanted him to be *hanged* [deposed], and he refused to agree to his merely being transported for life [dismissed]. The consequence of this abstention is rather curious. What Dr. Kennedy does is a rule of life to a good many other people. When these persons saw their leader keep his seat during the division, they concluded that it was their duty to keep their seats also. And so it came about that, although there was really a decided majority of the Assembly in favour of removing Professor Smith, the opposite motion was carried! It is simply and literally true, therefore, that Mr. Smith retains his chair through favour of the Highlanders.

Unfortunately the Professor's friends are shutting their eyes to the significance of this fact. They are acting as if they had achieved a triumph; and some of them have, most unwisely, begun to crow in their pulpits. Those who have done so have already received warnings as to the impolicy of that proceeding. "Aggrieved parishioners" have, in consequence, lifted up their testimony on the opposite side, and carried their Bibles and Psalm-books elsewhere. It is indeed a very hesitating verdict at the best which has been given on behalf of liberty to teach freely on the subject of the Pentateuch; and if the liberty is to be secured in permanence, it must be used cautiously at the outset.

All moderate men, on all sides, would be glad to let things rest. Mr. Smith, at the close of his case, made a nice little speech, which inclined even some of his most strenuous opponents to favour the plan of giving him "another chance." But the mischief is that he is the great card on Old Testament subjects in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and then he cannot help apparently acting as the enlightened critic. Of course, he cannot now whisper his opinions. Whatever he says is proclaimed with a trumpet all over

Scotland. And it seems that even in his very latest utterances he has said what may furnish a handle to his enemies. I must fear, therefore, that we have not yet heard the last of the Smith case. If he were to confine himself for a year or two to his duties at Aberdeen, or add to these only expositions of points not involving irritating controversy, peace, I think, would be assured. But he must be in the fight apparently; and there are too many lying await to miss the opportunities he gives them. It has already been announced that a manifesto is in preparation proclaiming irreconcilable opposition, and you need not be surprised to hear of an endeavour to renew the attack at the Commission of Assembly in August.

### SKETCHES FROM THE GALLERY.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, TUESDAY NIGHT.

It is a tendency in the human mind to magnify events near at hand. This may possibly lead one to form an exaggerated opinion of the scene in the House of Commons last night. Otherwise I should have no hesitation in saying that nothing to equal it has been performed by Her Majesty's servants at the Theatre Royal, Westminster. The historic sitting which lasted twenty-six and a-half hours will probably take pre-eminence by reason—first, of its comparative novelty at the time, and secondly, by its phenomenal prolongation. But that scene had long intervals of dreary repose. There were hours at a time when the stranger looking in from the fresh air outside (as Mr. Briggs, of Blackburn, at five o'clock in the morning) would see nothing but a depressed gathering of gentlemen wearily talking, and occasionally getting up to take round the division lobbies what is called in the Agricultural Hall "another lap."

The scene last night, from a quarter to five in the afternoon till five minutes past one this morning, was sustained throughout at a high pitch of excitement. No one knew at what moment it might close, or at what moment it might burst forth with renewed vigour. The latter tendency prevailed. Frequently it seemed as if what might prove a final division was about to be taken. Then someone got up from a fresh quarter of the House and led off in a new direction—the whole pack joyously barking at his heels. Mr. Newdegate was, in his solemn way, highly successful in this effort. Mr. Gladstone paid a just tribute to the integrity of the hon. member for North Warwickshire, which last night, as on many previous occasions, was proof against party passion, and led him to do what he thought was right, although he might find himself in the same lobby with the Liberals. But Mr. Newdegate is rather an honest than a wise man. One time, just on the stroke of midnight, when everyone was tired to death and impatient for a division that might lead to something, Mr. Newdegate interposed and raised a fresh issue by dwelling upon the necessity, now in his mind established, for the prohibition of notices of motion at question time. This is a delicate question, brim-full of controversy. At any time it would lead to an animated debate; last night, when there were many members chiefly anxious to prolong the scene and vex the soul of Mr. Gladstone, the opportunity was gladly seized, and in a moment the House found itself involved in an endless controversy on an abstract point of order.

Last of all, Mr. Biggar, in his cheerful way, tried to plunge the House back into the turbulent pool, just as it was crawling out, drenched, dispirited, and disgusted. Mr. O'Donnell, having had at his feet the Prime Minister, the leader of the Opposition, and the whole House of Commons, and doubtless himself feeling the physical and mental strain of this eight hours' brawl, was graciously pleased to intimate his readiness to come to terms. Two hours earlier advances made by Mr. Gladstone had led to a similar show of response from Mr. O'Donnell. He had then risen and set forth in involved language the terms of the question he would put to the detriment of the French Ambassador. But he had just outstepped the limits of the marvellous patience and moderation of the House, and had by a phrase or two gone beyond what it could stand. Whether he would keep within bounds now was (one o'clock in the morning striking from all the steeples, and everyone tired to death) a matter of much anxiety. He was good enough to gratify the general desire by limiting himself within the bounds of phrases acceptable, if not satisfactory, to the Prime Minister. Thereupon Mr. Gladstone gladly proposed to withdraw his resolution, and the whole matter would have collapsed.

It was for this that Mr. Biggar was watching and waiting. All through the long night he had saved his energies, or only partially expended them, in shrill cries of "Hear, hear!" when anybody in any part of the House said anything offensive of anybody else. Now, when matters seemed to be about to arrange themselves, Mr. Biggar found his opportunity. Paying no attention to the despairing shout with which his interposition was received, he, with a book of the Orders gracefully disposed on the back of the bench before him, proceeded to discuss the matter *de novo*, dwelling largely upon "the impetuosity of the Prime Minister," and carefully discriminating between the leader of the House and the Chairman of Committee, suggesting that Mr. Gladstone should apologise to Mr. O'Donnell. The House was too weary to laugh at this joke, which, moreover, was a little stale on adaptation. Its spirits were even too depressed to do more than maintain a sort of moan as Mr. Biggar, apparently as fresh as when he started on his famous four-hours' speech, mutilated polysyllables in his endeavour to rise to the height of the occasion, and preserve his character as a sort of Court of Appeal. But all things come to an end, even a speech from Mr. Biggar. No one backed him up, and the Speaker, who had had a trying night, lost no time in putting the question. It was that Mr. Gorst's amendment for a Select Committee should be withdrawn. After this the Premier's motion, that Mr. O'Donnell be not heard, was also withdrawn, and at a

quarter past one this morning the House took up the thread of interrogations which had been dropped nearly nine hours earlier. In this respect, at least, the scene is altogether without parallel. There is no record in Parliamentary history of questions being continued at one o'clock in the morning, having been commenced at the ordinary time of a quarter past four in the afternoon.

This morning will bring reflections of various kinds to many persons concerned. Mr. O'Donnell is the only one to whom the meditations of the morning can be an unmixed satisfaction. He, at least, has triumphed far beyond his wildest hopes. He has kept the House of Commons in an uproar through a livelong night. He has had the Premier suing to him to make even some decent show of submission, so that the House might skulk out of what every one agreed upon calling a painful position. At the end he has done very much as he wanted to do at the beginning. The stars in their courses have fought for him, and have left him victor all along the line. Mr. Gladstone cannot look back upon that night with anything but deepest vexation. He, the supreme commander of a powerful host, was thwarted and held at bay, not exactly by a single man, but by a course of circumstances which centred around him, using him as a tool and opportunity. But of all to whom the morning must bring the saddest reflection, it surely must be to Sir Stafford Northcote. For a paltry moment of triumph over a political adversary, he allied himself with the faction denounced in the turgid manifesto of his chief on the eve of the General Election. Had Sir Stafford thought only of the dignity of the House, and his duty to it as leader of the Opposition, matters would have assumed an altogether different aspect. When he joined his forces to those hastily summoned by Mr. Parnell, the conflict of order with anarchy was for the former a foregone conclusion of defeat. The only break of light on the whole business is the fact that in Mr. Newdegate, Sir John Mowbray, Sir W. Bartelott, Mr. Hermon, and about a score of the more influential and responsible members of the Conservative party were found men who would not stoop to the level of Sir Stafford Northcote, rather doing violence to their political habits by voting in the same lobby with Mr. Gladstone.

Mr. Richard has frequently addressed the House of Commons in support of a policy of general disarmament, but he has probably never exceeded the eloquence and earnestness which he brought to bear upon the subject to-night. It was doubtless the circumstance of Mr. Gladstone being Premier that inspired him with new fervour. However that be, there was no part of his speech more effective than the passage at its close, wherein he appealed to Mr. Gladstone to take on the new crown of glory that lay to his hand as the statesman who should first bring about the realisation of this beneficent scheme. There was a fair attendance of Liberals, more especially below the gangway; above, there were many vacant seats, the Treasury Bench being tenanted only by Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and Sir Charles Dilke—all earnest and attentive listeners to the speech. To members of the Conservative party the subject appeared to be so distasteful that they took the simplest way of relieving themselves of what they regarded as a nuisance, by stopping away. I do not think there were at any time during the debate twenty Conservatives in the House. The Front Opposition Bench was positively deserted, save for the presence of Mr. Cavendish Bentinck, who, probably by some odd process of reasoning connected with his having held the office of Judge Advocate General in the former Administration, was told off as a proper person to represent the party.

There was not much disposition on the part of those present prematurely to join in the debate, and Mr. Gladstone's speech subsequently disposed of any necessity that might be thought to exist. Mr. Richard, in expressing his complete satisfaction at the assurance of the Prime Minister, characterised the speech as "a magnificent one." It was none the less powerful for the subdued manner of its delivery. Doubtless affected by the almost empty appearance of the House, Mr. Gladstone avoided anything like oratorical manner, speaking in a low tone, and much as he might have addressed a fellow-guest across the dinner-table. But the theme insensibly elevated his thoughts and language, and his oration, should it be done justice to by the reporters, will be found to justify Mr. Richard's encomium. The Premier took an objection, natural to one in his position, to the passing of the resolution, which really was a definite instruction to Ministers on a delicate point of policy; but he did not resist a more abstract resolution proposed by Mr. Courtney, and thus the new Parliament was, on the threshold of its career, definitively and formally pledged to a policy of peace.

THE CONGREGATIONALISTS AND THE BURIALS BILL.—The following resolutions on the Bill of the Government for the amendment of the burial laws of England, were adopted by the Committee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales on the 9th inst.:—1. That the committee heartily approves of the general scope of the Bill, and recognises in its leading provisions an earnest endeavour on the part of the Government to redress the grievance of which Nonconformists have long complained. 2. That, nevertheless, in the judgment of the committee, the Bill is open to the following objections:—(1.) It departs from its own fundamental principle—viz., the civil right of burial—by requiring that all burial services shall be "Christian." (2.) It does not put an end to all legal distinctions in public cemeteries between consecrated and unconsecrated ground; (3.) It makes fees payable to clergymen (permanently, and not made by way of protection of life interests) in respect of burials in consecrated ground in cases in which the service is conducted by others; (4.) It recites the proceedings of Convocation as a reason for the proposed alteration of the Rubrics; (5.) It offensively classifies (schedules) the unbaptized with criminals and excommunicated persons. 3. That the committee therefore believes that the Bill will not effect a permanent settlement unless so amended as to remove the grounds of these objections.



### Centenary of Sunday-Schools and Anniversary of the Schools of Camberwell-green Congregational Church.

ON SUNDAY NEXT, June 20, 1880, the Rev. CLEMENT CLEMENCE, B.A., D.D., will preach in Camberwell-green Chapel, in reference to the Centenary movement. Morning subject:—Historical and Retrospective. Evening subject:—Prospective and Practical (especially for Sunday-school teachers). Services at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. Collections will be made on behalf of the Sunday-schools of Camberwell-green Congregational Church.

#### New College, London.

THE THIRTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held at the College, Finchley New-road, on FRIDAY EVENING, JUNE 25th. Service in the Library at Six o'clock, with an Address to the Students by the Rev. ALEXANDER HANNAY, Secretary of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, after which the chair will be taken by PROFESSOR BRYCE, M.P., and the business of the Annual Meeting transacted. Other Ministers and Gentlemen are also expected to take part in the proceedings. Subscribers and friends of the College are respectfully invited to attend.

W. FARRER, LL.B., Secretary.  
N.B.—The College is easily accessible by the Metropolitan and St. John's-wood Railway (Swiss Cottage Station), the London and North-Western (London-road Station), the North London and Hampstead Junction (Finchley-road Station), and the Midland (Finchley-road Station).

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### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"\* We have received a number of letters on "Lay Preaching" and other subjects, which, owing to the great demands on our space, we are quite unable to make use of this week.

### CONTENTS OF No. XXV.

LEADING ARTICLES:—	PAGE
The Burials Bill in Committee ... ..	627
Mr. Gladstone and the Opposition ... ..	627
Mr. Richard's Motion ... ..	632
Mr. Goschen at Constantinople ... ..	632
Notes on the Supplementary Budget ... ..	633
MISCELLANEOUS:—	
Sketch of the Burials Debate ... ..	628
European Disarmament ... ..	629
Reformed Church of France ... ..	634
Sketches from the Gallery ... ..	631
Mr. Dale on Spiritual Co-operation ... ..	634
News of the Free Churches ... ..	634
SUPPLEMENT:—	
The Liberation Conference ... ..	641
An Historical Retrospect ... ..	641
Notes on the Conference ... ..	643
Report of Conference Proceedings ... ..	645
Public Meeting at the Metropolitan Tabernacle ... ..	653

### THE Nonconformist and Independent.

(Combining the Patriot, Nonconformist, and English Independent.)

THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 1880.

### EUROPEAN ARMAMENTS.

THE success of Parliamentary motions is not always to be judged by the formal issue. The tone of the debate evoked is often of more importance than a successful division. And this is especially the case when the resolution under discussion embodies a principle of world-wide application, such as can only be remotely affected by a division in even so mighty a body as the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland. Mr. RICHARD's motion on European armaments was a case in point. The object sought was of an importance so enormous that it is much better served by the education of opinion than by a vote which might end in formalities. But Mr. RICHARD was fortunate in the formal termination of the brief debate he raised, as well as in its tone. For, while having the courage of his convictions, Mr. RICHARD could not have refrained from taking the earliest opportunity for testing the feeling of the new Parliament, he is one of the last men to press the Government to what they may think inopportune action on a point in which they are genuinely in sympathy with him. That sympathy was most emphatically declared by Mr. GLADSTONE in a speech of which Mr. RICHARD did not speak at all too strongly when he called it "magnificent." And when Mr. COURTNEY stepped in with an amendment which fully expressed Mr. RICHARD's desires, though without giving to their fulfilment the definiteness of time and mode set forth in his own resolution, the latter hon. gentleman could do nothing other than accept the amendment, which was unanimously carried. This unanimity was the more marked and significant as it was not recommended by Mr. GLADSTONE, who rather "acquiesced" than "concurred" in its adoption. It is something to be thankful for, after the late military fever, that the House of Commons should, without a division, have agreed "that it is the duty of HER MAJESTY'S Government, on all occasions when circumstances admit of it, to recommend to foreign Governments the reduction of European armaments."

But the tone of the debate, brief though it was, will give even more satisfaction to believers in peaceful progress than the terms of the amendment adopted. Mr. BAXTER did no more than justice both to the member for Merthyr Tydfil and to the new House, when he expressed his satisfaction that there had been "afforded to his hon. friend an opportunity of delivering one of his terse and telling speeches in favour of the good cause he had so much at heart to a far more sympathetic audience than he had ever addressed before." While treating with indifference the taunt that he belonged to the "Peace-at-any-price" party, Mr. RICHARD undertook to use no arguments but those that address themselves not to scrupulosity, nor to party feeling, but to common humanity. He carried the whole House with him when he set forth the terrible figures which tell of treasure squandered, of life wasted, of national resources perverted, and human powers degraded by the military mania which, behind a mask of peace, rages over Europe. There was possibly more divided feeling when he denounced, with honest indignation against mischievous cant, the cuckoo cry that "If you wish peace you must be prepared for war." But he had the satisfaction of learning that his views on this point were, to a considerable extent, shared by the present master of this country's destinies. He showed how statesmen of opposite parties, and newspapers unsuspected of humanitarian sentiments, have concurred with philanthropists in denouncing the cruel drain inflicted by wasteful armaments on the life's blood of progress. He showed how rotten and deceptive

is the security vainly supposed to be given by such means—a security in which sovereigns are devoutly thankful to have escaped assassination so far, and vast populations are in a chronic state of civil war. Finally he appealed to the Government, and especially to the PRIME MINISTER, to "earn the grateful benedictions of the peoples who are now groaning under this baneful system of militarism."

Mr. GLADSTONE, thus appealed to, was not slow in answering. Indeed, as on other occasions which we can feelingly recall, his response was almost too prompt for the general interests of the debate. And yet orators who may have had speeches prepared in support of Mr. RICHARD's motion might at least take the unselfish consolation that Mr. GLADSTONE's deliverance on the subject was worth the whole of them put together. It was not only his general support of the line of Mr. RICHARD's argument, not only his confirmation of the most telling facts advanced which was of value, but even more significant were some of his reasons for hesitating to accept the motion as it stood on the paper. "To address other Powers on this subject," he said, "is a very serious step. When Lord CLARENDON made overtures to France and Germany, there was nothing in our policy in any portion of the globe that at all weakened our position, or made it otherwise than desirable to be authors of such overtures. This was an essential point. It was necessary that we should stand *recti in curia*, and that we should not be met with the remark, 'What are you doing yourselves? You preach the gospel of peace, but are your hands free from the stain of blood?' I will not enter into particulars, as every one who hears me knows what I am alluding to." In other words, Mr. GLADSTONE regards this country as for the moment debarred by its late murderous policy in Afghanistan and South Africa, from appearing with common decency as the apostle of international disarmament. That there is a terrible force in such an argument it is impossible to deny. And it is, therefore, with heartfelt satisfaction we find that Mr. GLADSTONE still believes there is a way open by which the influence of this country may be made to tell on the side of peace. We can "pursue a foreign policy of peace and justice." We can "study moderation in our defensive establishments." And finally, when ourselves engaged in controversy, we can adopt "amicable and pacific means of escape from our disputes rather than resort to war." Reminded by this last point of the taunts that have been uttered concerning the *Alabama* arbitration, Mr. GLADSTONE declared that he had no regret for his part in it, and that, unjust though the basis of the judgment might be, he "regarded the fine imposed on this country as dust in the balance compared with the moral example set." To have evoked such a declaration of opinion from the most powerful minister this country has known for more than half-a-century is no small success for the cause which Mr. RICHARD's motion was intended to advance.

### MR. GOSCHEN AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

THE sentence has evidently gone forth against the Ottoman Empire in Europe. It may linger on awhile in Asia, adding one more to the many plagues which afflict that much-tormented continent; but in Europe its fate is sealed. That madness seems to have fallen on the Turk which, according to the oft-quoted adage, is the forecast shadow of doom. To say that he has been brought to bay would be to attach altogether too much dignity to his attitude. A helpless, shiftless man, with his back against the wall, eager to escape from the foes who surround him, if he did but know how, but, seeing no way open, standing still doggedly, and waiting for them to do their worst, is by no means a cheerful and inspiring spectacle; but it is just the spectacle to which Europe is being treated in Constantinople now. The SULTAN is falling back on his sacred character; he has consulted the Ulemas, and they pronounce against further concession to the infidel; and so, like the POPE, he says *non possumus* to all exhortations to reform, and bids the Great Powers do their worst. And the Great Powers do not know what to do, and he knows it; and he counts on their well-known jealousies to make his *non possumus* a power. But this time we think that he reckons without his host. He has played the game too often; and Europe is not only weary of it, but sees in it a grave danger, which, it is to be hoped, under the auspices of the GLADSTONE Administration, will be moved out of its way for ever. What ever troubles Europe may have in store—and there is no fear that she will have a too quiet life—the crowning trouble of the last four centuries seems to be coming to an end; and Christendom will no more be vexed and weakened by the presence of the head of a hostile, and now profoundly corrupt and vicious faith, in the fairest province of her realm, and in the peerless situation of the world.



The present attitude of the SULTAN, as far as can be gathered from the somewhat meagre information which reaches us, is far more favourable to the only settlement of which the Eastern question is capable than the endless promises with which he alternately excited and deluded the Government of Lord BEACONSFIELD. We know that he was essential to the BEACONSFIELD policy in the East, and he was Lord BEACONSFIELD's very good friend, eager to improve the Government of the Empire, and to walk in the ways of wisdom and uprightness. It is true that he did nothing; but his promises were, apparently, cordial, and were very comforting to his friends the Tories, who were always expecting that to-morrow the millennium in Turkey was to begin. But either the SULTAN is tired of making promises—which he may well be; it has been his chief occupation for years—or he knows that they will not be believed, and, therefore, that they are of no use. There is now no longer any disposition among the ruling statesmen in England to attach the slightest importance to his word, and he evidently feels that the time is come to give up a game which has been played out. But sullen, passive resistance he can still offer, and will offer, to the last. What is to be done if he simply sets his back against the wall, and waits? "He must be made to move by strong-handed coercion," is the answer. But who is to coerce him? and when he is made to move on to Asia, who or what is to occupy his place? The extreme difficulty of finding a satisfactory answer to these questions is the real and only strength of the SULTAN's position, as he stands there against the wall of his spiritual dignity and authority, refusing to move, and defying any one to touch him. But it seems to us that these are the questions which the Liberal Government in England ought to be spending all its strength in pressing on the attention of the great Powers. The collective note is all very well, and the supplementary Congress is all very well. Greece will get, not her due, but some measure of her due, and will be put upon her best behaviour to acquire the title to further and larger concessions, when the territory which at present is crushed by the brutal heel of the Ottoman tyrant comes to be distributed among the Christian populations of the East. We rejoice that one of the first fruits of the advent of the Liberals to power has been to bring all the strength of England to the side of which France was the only champion at the Berlin Congress, and which Lord BEACONSFIELD openly cast off. England has been the friend and helper of Greece from the first, and it is matter of great satisfaction to see her openly ranged with France on the side of the Greeks once more.

But the crown of European statesmanship will be voted to the man who proposes some feasible plan for replacing the Turk at Constantinople. It is all very well to say that that question is at present in the clouds. The Irish Church question was in the clouds a year before the Church was disendowed and disestablished amid the enthusiasm of the great mass of the English people. The clouds, in this case, are very near the earth, and it is the business of a statesman of genius to seek some practical solution of a question which from a practical point of view is the burning question of the day. Incomparably the greatest political question of our times concerns the destiny of Constantinople. No one likes to touch it because of the desperate difficulties which surround it; and all are eager to let the Turk stand against the wall as long as he can keep on his legs, lest his fall should be the signal for a general European war. To prevent that catastrophe the statesmen of Europe should take timely counsel, and be prepared for a crisis which is evidently very near. And in this work England should lead the way. There is not a shadow of doubt that things will grow worse and worse in the Turkish Empire, until it becomes so dangerous that the Powers will be compelled to do in haste what they can now do with due deliberation and with open concert. If the deliberation should prove that concert is impossible, then there is a sore time of trouble before Europe—and soon. But it would be a work well worthy of Mr. GLADSTONE's Government to propound some scheme which might be the basis of discussion, and possibly of action, resting on the recognition of the fact that the Government of the SULTAN is incurable, and that its continuance among the European Powers is a perpetual provocation to European war.

We doubt if Mr. GLADSTONE has in his own mind any expectation that the SULTAN could long be maintained at Constantinople as the suzerain of autonomous provinces; though the idea has been put forward as part of the Government programme. The Cabinet has "an open eye," and it must see that the Government of the SULTAN is rushing headlong to ruin, and that it will soon become impossible to endure its continuance as a European Power. The Government ought to be preparing for

the inevitable catastrophe. The *Standard*, which throughout the crisis has written with a good sense and dignity, which it would be well if the other Tory papers would imitate, prophesies that Mr. GOSCHEN's mission will end in failure unless he becomes the instrument of the final destruction of the Ottoman Empire and of all the formidable consequences which will follow in its train. That is precisely the contingency which we hope that he is prepared to contemplate with satisfaction; and we trust that those who instructed him have that issue clearly in sight. It is not as if any schemes, arts, or efforts could long delay it. In that case it might be worth while to try to keep the SULTAN on his legs for a while as suzerain of autonomous provinces. But the thing is doomed, as Lord DERBY said plainly, and he knows all about it, and can speak freely. It is simply the inevitable that the statesmen of Europe, and, above all, the Liberal Government of England, have to provide for; and Mr. GLADSTONE may be assured that a bold, firm policy, based on the recognition of what everybody sees, but nobody likes to acknowledge, will commend itself to the judgment and the conscience of the English people. By their policy in the East the Government will in the first instance be judged; for the whole civilised world is watching to see what they will do. The English people will back them heartily in any decided action that is honest—that is, which contemplates steadily things as they are, and not things as it may suit the diplomacy of Europe to make them seem. We believe that when the time comes Mr. GLADSTONE will show in this great cause an energy which will astonish those who sneer at him as a "peace-at-any-price" Minister, and we look upon Mr. GOSCHEN's mission as the first act of a drama which will end in the crossing of the SULTAN and his Pashas, "bag and baggage," to Broussa, and in the deliverance of the soil of Europe for ever from the malign influence of the Crescent.

#### NOTES ON THE SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET.

MR. GLADSTONE's "disappointing" Budget was the theme of an article in the *St. James's Gazette* the other day, which was only remarkable for its jaundiced partisanship. Our contemporary says that one reason was that so many people expected magical results from the CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER. No doubt they did; and moreover their wishes were realised. The master-hand of our greatest financier is visible throughout. His material was scanty enough. Sir S. NORTHCOTE's nominal surplus of £184,000 has been already swallowed up by one of the customary Tory devices—a supplementary estimate for £200,000. Beginning with less than nothing, Mr. GLADSTONE on Thursday night evolved a scheme first of all actually extinguishing the Malt Tax, which, by reason of its large amount, no Chancellor of the Exchequer for fifty years has ventured to touch. Then he reduces and revises the wine-duty scale, so as to enable him to negotiate favourably with France in view of a new commercial treaty, and with Spain, that is also willing to grant an equivalent, and to confer a boon upon the wine-growing districts of Australia—thus extending the markets for our manufactures at a time when trade is recovering but very slowly from its long depression. In the case of the Malt Tax, £1,100,000 a year is surrendered, to the great relief of the farmers, at a very critical juncture. But the sacrifice of revenue is only partial. The CHANCELLOR proposes in lieu of it a tax of 6s. per barrel on beer—the manufactured article—which is expected to yield in the first year £305,000. The loss on the wine duties is estimated at £233,000. To make good the deficit incurred by these remissions—though the loss will subsequently be, to a considerable extent, recouped—it is proposed to add a penny to the Income Tax, estimated to yield £1,425,000. By this means a surplus of £381,000 is secured as a margin. The additional Income Tax will not be all loss to the taxpayer—for the general public reap the advantage of agricultural prosperity and extended trade.

Mr. GLADSTONE's proposals, as the *Economist* remarks, "probably form in his mind portions of a far larger scheme to be brought forward on future occasions, should opportunity permit, which may be expected to be of still greater advantage to the prosperity of the country." They have been, on the whole, very favourably received. Country gentlemen were surprised to find their *bête noir*—the Malt Tax—so easily abolished, and could only regret that the dispenser of the boon was a political foe. Tenant farmers will be able to rejoice without any such alloy; and as to the publicans, who are taxed more in proportion than those who keep hotels and restaurants, they cannot do much to resist a proposal so obviously reasonable—their friends not being in power.

In the critical examination which the Supplementary Budget is undergoing, there is much diversity of opinion as to the probable effect of the new scale of duties on light wines, which is quite puzzling to the uninitiated. It is probable that Mr. GLADSTONE has acted under sound advice in the matter. To a great extent the highly fortified wines of the Peninsula are going out of fashion in England, and are being superseded by the light, pure wines of France. Probably the judgment of so experienced a firm as Messrs. H. R. WILLIAMS and Co. is to be relied on in the matter. They predict that the difficulties in the working of the new scale "will soon vanish in practice, so soon as the

measure fairly gets into operation"; adding that "for the wine trade, as well as for the wine-drinking portion of the public, to say nothing of the various interests incidentally affected, it will be a great boon; and it will, we venture to hope, conduce to increased morality and temperance in this country." We may presume that the new scale will also be acceptable to our neighbours across the Channel, for it was probably settled between M. LEON SAY and Mr. GLADSTONE before the departure of the former to assume his duties as President of the French Senate. Our Government are to have power to alter the wine duties by Order in Council, and will thus be well prepared to negotiate—in fact, have come to a preliminary arrangement with M. SAY. The Protectionists of France are very wroth at this prospect. Their great champion and M. POUYER-QUERTIER have inveighed in the Senate against a reduction of the duties on the chief products of English industry, whilst he and his colleagues in that assembly were quietly settling a higher tariff. The prompt and wise concessions of the GLADSTONE Cabinet have clearly forced the hand of the French Protectionists, and it is probable that whenever the new treaty is negotiated it will be as favourable to British interests as the last.

The debate in the House of Lords on Monday night was very saddening. Lord CARNARVON, in calling attention to the anarchical condition of Armenia as described in the recent Blue-books—robbery rife, the Kurds defying all local authority, the law courts "sinks of iniquity," and scores upon scores of villages depopulated by wild tribes or famine—asked whether anything could be done to save at least a remnant of the suffering people. In reply, Earl GRANVILLE said that one of the objects of the Government in trying to bring about the concerted action of the Great Powers was to oblige the Porte to carry out the engagements of the Treaty of Berlin relative to Armenia. Lord SALISBURY dealt with the subject in his characteristic fashion. The case was, he said, a hopeless one. "Heroic remedies" were useless. Terrible was the responsibility of the Ottoman Government, but nothing would be done by the SULTAN's advisers. The action of our consular agents might, in the lapse of time, effect something, and there was no other alternative but the extermination of various races of Armenia. Lord SALISBURY ridiculed the proposed concert of the Powers, which would only make "confusion worse confounded." This from the statesman who procured the insertion of the article in the Berlin Treaty requiring the Porte to carry out the necessary reforms in Armenia, and who negotiated the abortive Anglo-Turkish Convention! All this will, of course, encourage the pashas of Constantinople in their resistance to all our demands. The Government must not look to the late Foreign Secretary for any co-operation. It was, as the Duke of ARGYLE alleged, Lord SALISBURY himself who prevented the insertion of a provision in the Treaty of Berlin in favour of the common action of the Powers to bring about the required reforms, and now his lordship holds up to public contempt all their efforts to effect that object. "You shall not succeed, if I can help it, where we have failed," is the spirit of his amiable policy.

Yesterday afternoon the Supplementary Conference was to be opened at Berlin, under the presidency of Prince Hohenlohe, who will be in constant communication with the German Chancellor. It seems that the various representatives of the signatory Powers will first decide among themselves the general line of the future Turko-Greek frontier—the main difficulty being whether it is to include Janina and the adjacent districts. Our Government, disagreeing with its predecessors, are favourable to that arrangement, on the basis advocated by M. DE FREYCINET, as most in accordance with the intentions of the Berlin Congress; and it is reported that Prince BISMARCK supports the claims of Greece, though averse to Germany taking part in any coercive measures, and that Russia will act with the other Powers. When the frontier line is decided, a commission will be appointed to proceed to Thessaly and Epirus to define it; if they can—for it is quite on the cards that the Albanians, secretly encouraged by the Porte, will obstruct, if not directly resist, the work of the Commissioners. "The Turks," as the *Pall Mall Gazette* says, "will use every form of evasion and delay in order to keep Janina. Janina has been for ages a chief seat, the chief seat in that region, of Hellenic nationality and culture. For that reason the Turks will leave no stone unturned to keep it in their grasp. For the same reason there is no point on which they should be more distinctly told that the time has come when they must let go." The Treaty provides for the "mediation" of the Powers in case of Turkey and Greece being unable to agree, but not for the enforcement of their decision. That difficulty has yet to be faced.

The Porte has not been slow in coming to a decision on the subject—we suppose, a first decision. It is announced from Constantinople that the Turkish Cabinet has formally notified to the Powers that it cannot recognise their right to arbitrarily dispose of any part of the SULTAN's territory in favour of Greece, without consulting the Porte, and that it regards the Berlin Conference as a simple mediation of the Powers, whose decisions are not binding on Turkey. This reply has been sent off two days after the receipt of the identical note from each of the Powers requiring a prompt compliance with the three provisions of the Berlin Treaty—in respect to the Greek frontier question, the territory ceded to Montenegro, and the reforms promised in Armenia. The despatch referred to asks for a prompt reply, and calls the attention of the Porte to the gravity of the responsibility it would assume in leaving the execution of the Treaty of Berlin any longer in suspense. It is easy to surmise what the SULTAN's advisers will say in reply, but difficult to judge how far they will carry their resistance.



## MR. DALE ON SPIRITUAL CO-OPERATION.

The ordination of the Rev. J. W. Rogers, B.A., son of the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., of Clapham, which took place at South Hackney, on Tuesday evening, was rendered of more than usual interest by the presence at it of Mr. B. W. Dale, M.A., of Birmingham. Mr. Dale, who preached the sermon upon the occasion, referred, in his opening remarks, to the custom of delivering, at such times, a discourse in defence of the Congregational polity. The practice originated, he imagined, when there were but few Congregational churches in this country, and it was felt necessary to defend the formation of a society which had the sanction of neither Bishop nor Presbyter. It was not, however, necessary to be always proving their right to exist, any more than it was necessary to commence public worship always by proving the existence of the Deity or the genuineness of the four Gospels. It was not possible, perhaps, to forget the ecclesiastical storms that were raging without. But that night they would endeavour to think of the inner life of the Church. The Jews, in St. Paul's time, were so zealous in proving that their law came from God, that they forgot to obey it. The distinguishing characteristic of Congregationalism, was the recognition of the authorities of the Church. But authority could never be separated from responsibility. At the settlement of a new minister, people were disposed to rely upon his energy and devotion for success. But he could not stand alone. Apart from their co-operation he would be powerless. A congregation might listen to the noblest sermons, and yet the preaching have no effect. The pew might paralyse the pulpit. One object of the preacher was to enable his hearers to understand the books of Scripture. If he succeeded, the clouds that may have rested upon the teaching of Christ and His apostles would break, and the great doctrines of the Christian Church assume a more definite shape. Whatever the power of the preacher might be, these results could not be achieved without the vigorous concurrence of the people. The school boy must work if he is to read Sophocles or write Latin verses. The ethical and spiritual part of a minister's work also required concurrence. Christ came to create a new type of character. His teaching was full of great principles, and the work of the preacher was to illustrate those principles. But if this was to be done to any purpose, the people must have the desire to apprehend those principles. It was commonly assumed that Christian people know their duty, but are unfaithful to their knowledge. But for one sin that a man consciously committed, he might take it for granted that there were many committed by him of which he was ignorant. There must be a desire during the week to discharge every recognised duty, or there would be no perception of the truth taught on the Sunday. The idea of God was native to the human soul, yet how unfamiliar was it. Words of vast and awful significance were often on their lips, yet how much did they know of what the words stood for? To what use was it for the preacher to speak if those who listened never entered themselves into the presence of the eternal God? Confederation, in this sense, was what was wanted between preacher and people. Again, when prayer was offered, it was not a solitary soul that should be speaking to God, but every separate human life, containing a separate revelation of the infinite goodness of God, should enlarge the supplication. Every man, when he came to worship, recalling the manifestations of God in his own history, should stand ready to join in hymns of thanksgiving and in devout prayer. Some might have thanksgivings for victory over temptation, others be filled with wonder for the love that clung to them in defeat. Where there was not this deep spiritual sympathy the minister felt that he was alone, and the loneliness chilled and disheartened him. A pastor when speaking to those who have not acknowledged the authority of Christ is measured by the example of His people. If their hearts were not aflame with love, however earnestly the pastor might speak, men would not believe. It mattered not who was speaking in the pulpit if God was not speaking in the pew. The power of the Gospel itself, apart from the presence of God, was gone. How eager churches were to secure preachers who had the power to instruct and impress, but they forgot that, apart from the power of God, the returning tide of worldly engagements would sweep away impressions. The church was greater than the minister, was capable of accomplishing a greater work, just as the body was greater than any one member. They said that the real presence of Christ was secured when two or three gathered in His name, although no priest was in their midst. But the right of believers thus to meet was asserted that they might be free to fulfil their duties. Freedom was lost if duties were not discharged. It was true of nations and true of churches. The idea of the Congregational polity was the direct growth of this conception of the Christian life. They had fought the battle against sacerdotalism successfully in other churches, but the old evil would reappear if the church trusted to the minister to

enlarge its operations and sustain its life. The paralysis of the church was the paralysis of the minister. It was of no avail for the minister to speak wisely and well unless the church went with him. Eloquence was ghastly if it came from the lips alone, and the body was paralysed. From the immeasurable calamity of paralysis in the church he trusted that they and their pastor would be free. They had not transferred their responsibilities to their pastor; but he had come to help them to discharge them more efficiently. At the conclusion of Mr. Dale's discourse the usual questions were answered by the young pastor, and the ordination prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Newth, of New College. An earnest charge to the minister, based upon the words, "Be thou faithful," was then delivered by his father, and the service was brought to a close with the benediction. The inclemency of the weather prevented a large congregation.

## REFORMED CHURCH OF FRANCE.

LETTER FROM DR. PRESSE.

I MUST revert to-day to the present condition of Protestantism in France, a subject to which I have not called the attention of your readers for some time. We shall have only too frequent occasion to speak of the contest between our Government and the Ultramontanes, for the time given to the Jesuits to dissolve their society in France, expires at the end of the month. The Minister of the Interior has summoned to Paris the Prefects of Departments in which the Jesuits have religious houses, to give them their instructions. We are, therefore, coming near to the decisive day in this great conflict. There is some talk of a grand debate in the Senate before the crisis actually arrives. The Ultramontane party will then openly take up arms. It is much encouraged just now by the election of its most determined leader—Mgr. Freppel, who was returned to the Chamber of Deputies on Sunday last by the town of Brest. This triumph is, in reality, a fresh cause of peril, for the presence in Parliament of so determined an enemy of our Republican institutions, will be an incessant provocation to the Democratic party, which did not need any fresh stimulus to its zeal.

To turn now to the condition of French Protestantism, I would begin by reminding you, that last autumn the first unofficial Synod assembled in Paris. It was the true representation of the Evangelical section of our Established Reformed Church. This Synod, which by its very composition had placed itself outside the limits of officialism, was a practical demonstration of the hopelessness of settling by any regular methods, the questions of Church order raised by the Evangelicals; for they would not have had recourse to this means if they could have looked for any solution of their difficulties by a General Synod convoked or authorised by the State. It was, as I have said, an attempt to realise the life of a Free Church within a Church by State established, for with the exception of the link with the State supplied by the Budget of Public Worship, the organisation decided upon by the unofficial Synod was complete. The exception is, however, a notable one, for this one link might at any moment become a fetter impeding free action. Apart from this, everything was organised as in a Free Church. There was to be a synodal commission, a common fund, a system of visiting the churches and of ordaining pastors.

Even in this unofficial Synod, however, there was a party which was desirous to see the General Synod restored. This party, while remaining faithful itself to orthodox convictions, was disposed to seek a *modus vivendi* with the Rationalists, by abandoning for the present the attempt to frame a common confession of faith for the Church, and by allowing the congregations in which Rationalism predominated, to organise themselves according to their own convictions, no doctrinal tests being imposed upon new pastors. What they advocated therefore really amounted to this: that the Synod of the future should repudiate the confession of faith voted by the Synod of 1872. Only on this condition could they hope to obtain the consent of the Rationalists to a requisition to be presented by them, in common with the Evangelicals, for a fresh General Synod; and the Government would not grant such a demand unless made by the entire Church.

The Rationalists accepted this proposal, but it did not gain a majority in the unofficial Synod. It was agreed, however, for the sake of conciliation, to submit the question to the provincial unofficial Synods. These have all held their meetings since the beginning of the year, and they have unanimously rejected the proposed compromise, on the very strong ground that it is one thing to endure disorder in the Churches as an unhappy incident of the times, and quite another thing to give it legal recognition by a vote in the Synod. In order that your readers may form some idea of the clearness of the decisions arrived at in these provincial Synods, I may cite a passage from the report of the Synod of Avignon, which is a very fair representative of all the rest. It runs:—"This Synod, considering that the proposed compromise would tend to aggravate the

existing confusion by sanctioning it, and by demanding of the Synod of the future, as a preliminary condition of its assembling, that it should pledge itself to vote for the withdrawal of Article 2 (that which contains the Confession of Faith), thus giving unrestrained liberty of religious teaching in all the Reformed Churches, and proclaiming the absolute independence of the Consistories, that is to say, practically destroying the authority of the Synods: this Synod, therefore, considering that the bases of a real and sincere union between the two sections of the Church have not yet been found, and that under these conditions it appears difficult to secure the regular operation of the system of official Synods, prays for the day when the Reformed Churches may be able to enter again into full possession of the liberal and constitutional government which they originally enjoyed.

"This Synod, in common with the general unofficial Synod, maintains the moral and ecclesiastical authority of Article 2, and supports the declarations of the Synodal Letter on this point.

"It further prays that the unofficial Synods may persevere in the course on which they have entered, summoning all those who have placed their hope in Christ, to rally round the standard of the faith as raised by the Synod of 1872, and endeavouring by every means in their power to promote the prosperity of our Church, and the evangelisation of our country."

One Synod alone, that of Normandy, made some modifications in the form of these bold resolutions, while still retaining their substance. The journal of the Rationalist party, *La Renaissance*, has rejected its advances with scornful indignation. It is clear, then, that the party of conciliation has been completely beaten in the provinces as in Paris. This result is of great importance. It is a final blow to those who in all good conscience have hoped to reorganise the Evangelical Church under the system of an Establishment. The triumph of the unofficial Synod assures, sooner or later, that of the voluntary principle. The issue may vary, but it will surely come.

E. DE PRESSE.

## NEW-COURT CHAPEL.

"Out of debt out of danger" is an axiom to be held in reverence by public bodies as well as private individuals, and, therefore, it was that a goodly company assembled at New-court Chapel, Tollington-park, to rejoice with one another that they had cleared off their debt and were free. There was a tea provided on a liberal scale, there was, after tea, Dr. Allon's organist to play, and after that a public meeting, with the pastor, the Rev. William Park, in the chair. Nor was that all. Subsequently there was a cold collation, which helped, at any rate, to protract proceedings of an unusually interesting character. New-court has a history. It existed before the glorious Revolution, when for a pastor it had the Rev. Daniel Burgess, who seems to have taken the oversight of a remnant of the flock of the celebrated Dr. Manton, and who met for worship in Brydges-street, Covent-garden, in Russell-court, Drury-lane, and ultimately in Carey-street, where, in 1709, the mob, under the guidance of the too famous Sacheverell, broke the windows of the chapel, tore down the pulpit and pews, and burnt them in the neighbouring square of Lincoln's-inn. In 1713 Mr. Burgess was succeeded by the Rev. James Wood, who was ordained by the Rev. Mathew Henry, and laboured with acceptance till he became, in 1737, the successor of Mr. Reynolds, at the Weigh-house. Then there came to New-court Mr. Henry Frances, a native of the Principality, who, as a student at Tewkesbury, had for one of his fellow students Mr. Thomas Secker, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. The third stated minister of New-court was the far-famed Thomas Bradbury, who laboured there from 1728 to 1759. Mr. Bradbury had several assistants, and one of them was the Rev. Richard Winter, who succeeded him, and never quitted the church till his death in March, 1799. The Rev. W. Thorpe, afterwards of Bristol, succeeded him in the year 1800. In 1806 the Rev. Dr. Winter, nephew of Rev. Richard Winter, became pastor of the place, which office he filled till his death, in 1833. The successors of Dr. Winter were the Rev. Robert Ainslie, the Rev. J. M. Miller, the Rev. James Smith, now of Wisbeach, and the Rev. W. H. Draper. In 1806 the site of the chapel was required for the New Law Courts, and in 1870 the foundation-stone of the present handsome building in Tollington-park was laid by Mr. Samuel Morley, M.P. In 1877 the Rev. William Park, of Southport, Lancashire, was invited to preach, and the result was that he became the pastor, and that under him New-court has prospered and grown strong. To one who recollects, as the writer does, old New-court, in that dirty neighbourhood, now, let me thankfully record it, improved off the face of the earth, the change to the New-court of to-day is something marvellous. A superb pulpit, a fine organ, a commodious and light and airy building, in which nearly 1,200 people can sit and hear in comfort, and to their mutual edification, was not a slight change to the New-court as I recollect it, when one Sunday morning I dropped in to hear the Rev. Robert Ainslie, who might have been a great thinker and a profound reasoner, but who, as regards the modern Babylon, may be said to have lifted up his voice very much in vain.

After some fine singing by the choir, the Rev. Mr. Park, declining to make a long speech, instanced the place as an illustration of the solidification of co-operation. A debt had been extinguished, a small church had grown into a large one, and the organisations of the place were in an efficient character.

It appeared from the statement made by the treasurer, Mr. Wilkins, that the cost of the place was £12,682; that of this £8,000 was

derived from the sale of the old chapel, and that what the people themselves had really raised was £4,000. Addresses were then delivered more or less congratulatory by the Rev. W. Davison, Wesleyan minister, the Rev. Mr. Noble, the Rev. A. Mearns, who pleaded now that the people had paid off their debt they should devote themselves to providing for the spiritual needs of the community of London at large; and Mr. Gauntlett, who had something to do with the purchase of the site.

## News of the Free Churches.

## CONGREGATIONAL.

— Mr. O. Jacobs, of the Bristol Institute, has accepted the pastorate of the church at Neyland, Pembrokeshire.

— The bazaar at Foulmire, to which we last week made reference, realised about £200 towards the Centenary Fund.

— The Rev. Elvery Dothie, B.A., has been appointed travelling secretary to the School for Missionaries' Daughters.

— The church at Castle Camps (Rev. J. Brockis, pastor) has just obtained an excellent harmonium, which was opened on the 13th inst.

— Rev. J. D. Kilburn has accepted for twelve months the pastorate of the British and American Congregational Church, at St. Petersburg.

— Rev. J. Finn has resigned his pastorate of the church at Gatley, Cheshire, and has accepted the call of the church and congregation of Lostwithiel, Cornwall.

— Rev. G. T. Carr has resigned the pastorate of the church at Ash-next-Sandwich, Kent, having accepted an invitation from the church and congregation at Pemberton-street, Sunderland.

— The Rev. James S. T. W. Smith has resigned the church at Wardour-street, Soho, London, W., and accepted the pastorate of Union Congregational Church, Parish-street, Horselydown, London, S.E.

— Rev. J. H. Jones, of Ton Ystrad, Glamorgan-shire, who has been in delicate health for some time, died on Friday afternoon. The deceased was widely known and greatly esteemed throughout the Principality.

— The anniversary sermons of the church and school at Adlington, Lancashire (Rev. J. Potts, pastor), were preached on Sunday, June 6, by the Rev. R. W. Selbie. The collections realised upwards of £72.

— Rev. J. C. W. Edwards was ordained as pastor of the church at Lindfield on the 8th inst. Rev. R. V. Pryce gave the charge to the pastor; Revs. A. Reed, G. L. Turner, F. Jones, R. Hamilton, and E. Storr took part in the engagement.

— The chapel at Croydon was reopened on the 10th inst., after alterations involving a cost of about £500. At the services, which also celebrated the 22nd anniversary of the ordination of the Rev. T. E. Noyes, collections in aid of the fund amounted to nearly £80.

— At the annual meeting of the church and congregation meeting at Union Chapel, Cotton-end, pastor Rev. J. H. Tuckwell, special reference was made to the handsome tablet and platform, recently erected to the memory of the late esteemed pastor, Rev. John Frost.

— A neat marble tablet has been erected by voluntary subscriptions in East Boldon Church, as a tribute of respect to the memory of the late Mr. Robert Codling, of West Boldon, for many years a deacon of this church, and superintendent of the Sabbath school.

— A recognition service in connection with the settlement of Rev. Frederick Longman, as pastor of the united churches of Haytesbury and Sutton-veney, was held on the 9th inst. The sermon on the occasion was preached by the Rev. Arnold Thomas, of Bristol.

— The annual meeting of Brecon Memorial College was held on the 9th inst. The financial statement showed that the balance due to the treasurer had increased during the year from £225 to £520. Revs. Dr. Kennedy and Dr. Aveling attended as representatives of the Congregational Fund Board.

— The members of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society connected with the church at Nasington, Northants, at their annual soiree, on the 8th inst., presented to the president (Rev. J. W. Upton) two volumes of Dr. Ellicott's New Testament Commentary, as a token of their regard.

— Anniversary sermons in connection with the Sunday-school, Russell-street, Wednesday, were preached on Sunday last by the Rev. F. Wagstaff, pastor, who also conducted a children's service in the afternoon. Owing to the depressed condition of the cause there had been no anniversary held for three years.

— The annual Sunday-school sermons at Park Chapel, Ramsgate, were preached by Rev. R. Berry, of London, on Sunday last. The venerable sanctuary was crowded at both afternoon and evening services. In the morning the choir gave a service of song under the presidency of the pastor, the Rev. J. Robinson. The collections of the day amounted to £80 18s. 3d.

— A flower service was held at St. John's-wood Church on the 13th inst., on behalf of the Hospital Sunday Fund, and a sermon on flowers was preached by Rev. John Thomas, the pastor. The collection amounted to £7. Two cart-loads of bouquets and plants were afterwards conveyed to the Children's Hospital, Great Ormond-street, St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, &c.

— A bazaar was held on the 11th ult. in aid of the building fund for the erection of a new church for the friends worshipping at the Tabernacle Congregational Church, Hanley (Rev. T. Kilpin Higgs, pastor). W. Y. Craig, Esq., M.P. for North Staffordshire, presided at the opening, and the three days' sale produced the very handsome amount of £1,175, from £300 to £400 worth of goods remaining for future disposal.

— Under the "Baptist" heading last week, the secession from that denomination of the Rev. D. R. Hamilton, pastor of the church at Sablen, near Clitheroe, was announced, and coupled with this was the intimation of a belief that he had "decided to join the Establishment." Rev. D. R. Hamilton writes to say: "I am not joining the Establishment, but have decided to enter the Congregational ministry."



— Rev. Bloomfield James, pastor of Walter-road Church, Swansea, on Saturday, sent in his resignation, and the action taken by the rev. gentleman may this time be regarded as final, he having accepted a call in Scotland. The Rev. Thomas Jones, who recently returned from Australia, and "who is very popular in the town, is spoken of," says the South Wales Daily News, "as the probable successor of the Rev. Bloomfield James."

— A bazaar and fancy fair in connection with Masehill Church, Greenwich (Rev. E. H. Higgins, pastor), was held on May 25, 27, and 28, in aid of the fund for providing new classrooms and vestries. The bazaar was opened by J. Ebenezer Saunders, Esq., member of the London School Board, and one of the Liberal candidates at the late election for the borough. The result was very satisfactory, a considerable sum being handed over to the building funds as the proceeds.

— The first sermons on behalf of the Sunday-schools at Highbury, Birmingham, under the pastorate of the Rev. C. Leach, were preached on Sunday last. Nine months ago there was neither church, congregation, nor Sunday-school. Now there is a church of 300 members, 600 seatholders, and average morning congregation of 600, evening congregation 1,000. There are 480 scholars in the schools, with 29 teachers. The services were very successful, and the collections good.

— A church in the early Gothic style, providing, at a cost of £2,200, accommodation for 500 worshippers, and schoolrooms for 200 children, has been opened at Urmston. About two years since, under the auspices of the Lancashire Union, a building was rented in Edge-lane for preaching purposes. The place soon became too small for the congregation. The building just completed is to be used ultimately for school purposes only, the intention being to erect a church on an adjoining plot of land.

— Rev. T. Chalkley, of Hackney College, was publicly ordained to the pastorate of the church at Chertsey, on Thursday last. After devotional services by Rev. F. Baron, Rev. Horrocks Cocks, in the place of Professor Turner, explained the constitution of a Christian church. The usual questions were asked by Professor Christie, and the ordination prayer, which was followed by imposition of hands, was offered by Professor McAll. The charge to the young minister was delivered by Rev. W. Griffith, of Croydon. The sermon to the people was preached on the following Sunday evening by Rev. J. Hart.

— The remains of the late Mr. Isaac Perry were interred on the 9th inst. in the New London-road Cemetery, Chelmsford. The funeral was attended by a long array of mourners, including deputations from various societies, and about eighty former members—many of them being gray-haired men from distant towns—of a Bible-class started by Mr. Perry about half-a-century ago. Along the line of route blinds drawn down showed the respect in which the deceased was held. The service at the grave was conducted by the Rev. G. Wilkinson, who preached a funeral sermon on the following Sunday at London-road Chapel.

— Sunday, 6th June, being the last Sabbath in which the congregation would assemble for worship in the ancient Congregational Chapel in Newport Pagnell, two sermons were preached by the Rev. J. A. Balshaw (the pastor), and an address given to the Sunday-school children in the afternoon. There was a large attendance and a good collection. The state of repair of the old chapel rendering it necessary to take it down, arrangements have been made for the erection of a new one on an adjoining and more convenient site. An agreement has been entered into for the purchase, not only of the site, but also of a commodious house and premises close adjoining the new chapel, for a manse. To complete the project, £2,500 will be required.

— The chapel at Colyton, which has undergone considerable improvement internally and externally, was reopened on the 8th inst. The sermon was preached by the Rev. C. B. Symes. At the evening meeting, Mr. T. Pady, the senior deacon (now 80 years of age) and son of the first pastor of the chapel, alluded to the state of affairs in 1813, when a young farmer, finding no place of worship but the Established church and the Unitarian chapel, erected a Congregational chapel, which some years after had to be enlarged. Still there was no appointed minister, and then his father regularly devoted himself to the ministry, and continued in it until, at the end of thirty-nine years, age brought his labours to a termination. In addition to enlarging the chapel, they had built schools, and he was happy to say that all their work was now free from debt. Addresses were delivered by Revs. E. H. Perkins, C. B. Symes, W. E. Foote (Baptist), H. W. Parsons, W. Phillips, E. Collings, J. A. Merrington, and C. E. Boughton (pastor).

— The Rev. W. Crosbie, on leaving Victoria-street Church, Derby, the pastorate of which he has held for 16 years, to undertake the ministerial charge of a church in Brighton, was presented on the 8th inst. with a silver tea and coffee service, accompanied by 60 pieces of Derby china; illuminated addresses from the Sunday-school, from the Young Men's Senior Bible Class and the ministers of the neighbourhood; and an Oxford Bible from the members of another Bible-class. It was mentioned at the meeting that the number of members in church fellowship 16 years ago was between 300 and 400. Some 1,300 have been since admitted, and the numbers in the church with the various branches amount to 970. A debt of £3,000 had been paid off, and new school premises and two mission halls had been erected, and the cost defrayed. Important help had also been rendered in the erection of new churches at Normanton and Long Eaton. Aldermen Longdon, J. P., Anderson, Roe, Hobson, and the Revs. F. Knowles, W. Griffith, T. Mirams, W. H. Tetley, J. Thomas, and H. G. Button took part in the proceedings.

— Special services have been held at Bond-street Church, Leicester, to celebrate the seventh anniversary of the Rev. Morley Wright's ministry there. Mr. Wright, in the course of the proceedings, mentioned that when he came among them the membership was only 150, and had now risen to 315. During the seven years the church and congregation had raised upwards of £8,000, of which £400 had been contributed for foreign missions, £1,400 for home missions, £800 for local charities and the colleges, £400 for the poor, and £200 for the Sunday-schools. He testified that, after his experience, he knew of no

position more thoroughly independent, freer for the utterance of all a man believes to be true, than the position of a minister of a Congregational church, if only he be hard-working, self-denying, and unwavering in his allegiance to the great verities of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Revs. J. G. Greenhough, W. Thew, J. Williamson, and E. R. Barrett delivered fraternal addresses. Mr. Wright announced that the response to the appeal regarding a new organ had been so liberal that the order for it had already been given, and that it was hoped the opening services would be held in November.

— On Wednesday, June 9, at a social gathering of the church and congregation at Sutton, Surrey, a report was presented by the Building Committee of the new church for the erection of which a plot of land has been purchased on the Sutton Court Estate. The report showed that promises had already been made to the amount of £1,500, exclusive of £600, the cost of the land, which had been generously given by a member of the Building Committee. A letter was read from a gentleman formerly connected with the church, promising a donation of £300. Further promises were made in the room amounting to between £100 and £200. During the evening Mr. Henry Jones, who for several years has acted as honorary secretary to the church, and upon whom has rested a large proportion of its responsibilities, was presented with a very handsome testimonial in the form of a beautifully illuminated address on vellum, elegantly mounted and framed, with a purse of fifty guineas, as a token of the high esteem and Christian regard in which he was held by the various members of the church and congregation, and as an expression of gratitude for his unflagging energy and zeal in the work of which the present success of the church had been the outcome. The gift, which was quite unexpected, was acknowledged in most feeling terms.

— An interesting service was held on the 7th inst., at Cannock Church, of which the Rev. A. Cooke is pastor. It was the ordination to the Christian ministry of the Rev. C. W. Cremer, who purposes to devote his life to work in connection with the evangelisation of France. Mr. Cremer is a native of Holland, and has received a full university education. Having lived in France for many years, he became imbued with those sceptical opinions which so largely prevail among Continental Liberals. Attendance upon the ministry of the Rev. A. Cooke led him to renounce these views, and the effect of the change upon his mind has been a resolve to give up his profession as a civil engineer in order that he may go and preach the Gospel in France, a work for which his former experience renders him peculiarly adapted. Rev. T. Green gave an address on "The adaptation of Congregationalism for the work of Evangelisation among the nations of Europe;" Rev. R. S. Ashton described the field of labour in France; Rev. T. Hindley, of Walsall, asked the usual questions; Rev. A. Cooke offered the ordination prayer; and Rev. Dr. Thomson gave the charge to the newly-ordained minister. At the evening meeting an illuminated address and a selection of standard theological works were presented to Mr. Cremer in token of the high regard in which he is held in Cannock.

— The Rev. Stuart J. Reid was publicly recognised as pastor of the church at Wilmslow, near Manchester, on Tuesday, June 8. After tea a large meeting was held, presided over by Dr. Somerville, the senior deacon, who gave an interesting account of the origin and past history of the church, and of the circumstances under which Mr. Reid had been unanimously invited to the pastorate. Mr. Alderman Thompson, another of the deacons, gave a very cordial address of welcome to the new minister on behalf of the church and congregation. Prayer was offered by the Rev. J. W. Paul, of Cheddle, and addresses were delivered by the Rev. A. Clarke, of Stockport; the Rev. C. Slater, of Broughton-park; the Rev. R. Craig, of Salford; the Rev. A. McKeenall, of Bowdon; the Rev. T. Willis, of Manchester; the Rev. R. Lovett, of Rochdale; and the Rev. A. Reid, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The Rev. Stuart J. Reid gave expression, in appropriate terms, to the feelings with which he had for five years pursued his ministry at Broughton, and with which he now entered on his new sphere. Mr. Harrison, one of the deacons at Broughton, spoke of the regret of the people there at parting with him, and their goodwill and best wishes towards him at Wilmslow. Messrs. Cresswell, Goodier, McConnell, and Davies, of Wilmslow, afterwards addressed the meeting. The proceedings throughout were marked by much enthusiasm. The presence of the venerable father of the young minister, who has just completed a ministry of half a century in Newcastle, and has removed to live with his son at Wilmslow, and of the Rev. A. Clarke and the Rev. T. Willis, who had both, as former members of his church, been introduced by him into the ministry, gave more than ordinary interest to the meeting.

— The Rev. T. Tonkinson preached his farewell sermons to crowded congregations on Sunday last, on his retirement from the pastorate of St. Clement's Congregational Church, Ipswich, preparatory to his departure for Dunedin, New Zealand. On Tuesday evening, June 15, a tea and valedictory service was held in the chapel, when a very large number of friends assembled to take farewell of Mr. Tonkinson. The chair was occupied by E. Grimwade, Esq., J.P., one of the deacons, as well as one of the founders of the church, and was surrounded by Revs. G. H. Sandnell, T. W. Tozer, and W. Scott, Congregational ministers; the Rev. T. M. Morris, W. Emery, and J. Mostyn, Baptist ministers; the Rev. P. M. Martin, Presbyterian; Rev. T. Sanderson, Wesleyan; Rev. R. Collinson, United Methodists; and Rev. M. Heath, Primitive Methodist. After the reading of the Scriptures and prayer by the Rev. G. H. Sandnell, the chairman addressed the meeting, and on behalf of the friends at St. Clement's, and of other churches and denominations in Ipswich, presented Mr. Tonkinson with a testimonial of 150 guineas. Addresses were afterwards delivered by the Revs. T. M. Morris, P. M. Martin, T. W. Tozer, W. Scott, W. Emery, and T. Sanderson, who all spoke in the highest terms of Mr. Tonkinson, and of deep regret at his leaving Ipswich. It was a genuine and loving tribute to a worthy and devoted minister of Jesus Christ which was thus tendered to him by his ministerial brethren. Few could come in contact with Mr. Tonkinson without being impressed with his genuine character, his goodness of heart, his zeal for his Master's service, and the loving and catholic

spirit which he has ever manifested during his comparatively brief pastorate at Ipswich, and it is fervently hoped that his labours in New Zealand will be greatly blessed. The Rev. J. Mostyn took part in the devotional services, and the meeting was closed with prayer.

#### BAPTIST.

— The Southern Baptist Association held their meetings last week at Romsey.

— A grand Eisteddfod, in which there were 172 competitors, was held at Peniel Chapel, Pentyrch, last week.

— A special gathering connected with the erection of the first English Baptist chapel at Morriston, Swansea—details of which we gave in our last issue, was held on Thursday last.

— On Lord's-day, June 13th, the anniversary services of the Sunday-school at Long Wharton were held. The Rev. W. A. Davies, of Keyworth, conducted them. The congregations were large.

— Mr. Harold Wright, B.A., LL.B., of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and of the Middle Temple, London, son of the late Mr. J. S. Wright, M.A., was on Wednesday last week called to the Bar.

— Recognition services connected with the settlement of the Rev. J. M. Jones as pastor of the English Baptist Church at Tonypandy, were held last week. Sermons were preached by several ministers.

— The Church at Battersea-park-road, are contemplating the erection of a new chapel to meet the requirements of the increasing congregation; and Mr. Spurgeon has accepted the trusteeship of the fund.

— The Rev. M. H. Whetnall, late of the Pastors' College, has accepted a call to the church at Montague-street, Blackburn, after a pastorate of two years and eight months at Fountain-street, Ulverston.

— The first anniversary of the settlement of the pastor, the Rev. G. J. Moore, was celebrated at Grafton-street, Northampton, on the 7th inst., when a handsome writing-table and an inkstand were presented to him.

— On Tuesday, June 8, a public meeting was held in Wood-green Chapel to bid farewell to the pastor, the Rev. James Pugh. An address, couched in affectionate terms, was presented to him, and also a purse containing some £25.

— At the recent anniversary of the oldest Sunday-school in Berkhamstead, the pastor of the church, the Rev. Giles Hester, late of Sheffield, preached, and the largest collection ever received on the occasion, amounting to £15, was made.

— Mr. Spurgeon, who was compelled by a slight attack of his old complaint to absent himself from the Liberation meeting at the Tabernacle on Friday, which he had promised to attend, was sufficiently recovered on Sunday to preach as usual.

— The erection of a new chapel is contemplated by the church at Latimer-street, Birmingham, and the proceeds of a lecture on "Bells, their Chimes and Echoes" last week, delivered by Miss A. A. Goe, are to inaugurate the necessary fund.

— Sunday-school anniversary services in connection with the church at Riddings, Derbyshire, were held on the 13th inst. The pastor, Rev. Jas. Hutchinson, delivered two sermons to large congregations. The collections were good, amounting to £21 12s. 10d.

— Sunday-school sermons have been preached at Pershore, by the Rev. J. H. Foek, the pastor; at King's Sutton, Northamptonshire, by the Rev. C. Winters and the Rev. Arthur Murrell; and at Lumbwith-Rossendale, by the Rev. Harry Abraham (pastor) and the Rev. George Alway.

— In celebration of the Sunday-school Centenary the church at Helston, whose school was the first established in the town, have resolved upon the erection of much-needed new premises, for which it is probable that funds will be forthcoming without public subscription.

— Sermons in connection with the Sunday-school anniversary were preached at Trinity Chapel, Bexleyheath, on Sunday, June 13. In the morning by the pastor, Rev. G. Smith, and in the evening by the Rev. J. Jones, of the Temple, St. Mary Cray. A service for scholars and their parents was held in the afternoon.

— Nearly £2,500 had, we understand, up to the end of last week, been contributed to the memorial fund to the late Mr. J. S. Wright, M.P., £1,000 of this amount is to be specially devoted to the encouragement of art classes. It is estimated that a total of £1,200 will be required for the proposed statue, as to which largely-attended public meetings are still being held in the various wards of Birmingham.

— Recognition services connected with the settlement of the Rev. A. Harmer as pastor of the Church at Chatham-road Chapel, took place on Wednesday last week. At the public meeting Mr. C. De Selin, court president. The Rev. Professor Rogers delivered the charge to the pastor, and the Rev. E. Henderson, of Wandsworth-road Chapel, that to the chapel. Other addresses were also delivered.

— At a meeting on Monday evening of the church and congregation connected with Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, for the purpose of bidding farewell to the Rev. H. Varley, jun., whose twelve months' engagement to supply the pulpit had expired, he was presented with an address of acknowledgment of his services, and a valuable gold watch and appendages as an expression of esteem. Mr. Councillor Jackson presided.

— The Breconshire Association, on Tuesday and Wednesday last week, held its annual meetings at Talgarth. The Rev. D. B. Richards presided at the conference. As it was impossible, owing to the inclemency of the weather, to hold the public meetings in the open air, as usual, the Welsh gatherings took place in the chapel, and the English in the Assembly Rooms. A large number of ministers of the Principality took part in the proceedings.

— On Tuesday last week Mr. Spurgeon opened a bazaar at Fowler-street schools, in aid of the renovation fund of Walworth-road Chapel, and at the same time presented to Mrs. Howieson, wife of the pastor (Rev. W. Howieson), a life-size portrait of the latter, subscribed for by members and friends of the church, in recognition of his faithful services during the last 31 years' ministry. Upon the first day the financial result of the bazaar amounted to £155.

— Jubilee services in connection with the chapel at Whitebrook, (Monmouthshire), were held on the 13th and 14th inst. On Sunday, sermons were preached by

the Rev. Joseph Lewis, of Tredegar. On Monday at 2.30, the Rev. B. Johnson, of Raglan, preached. A public tea was afterwards held. The evening meeting was presided over by Mr. B. W. Provis, of Coleford; when addresses were delivered by the Revs. J. Lewis, B. Johnson, R. Fish (Independent), H. Brivels, E. Davies, and Mr. Webb (Monmouth).

— Under the presidency of Mr. Allison, the annual tea and public meeting of the Spurgeon Sermon Tract Society was held on Wednesday, last week, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. The report submitted showed that upwards of 17,000 sermons have during the past year been issued as loan tracts, and during the past ten years the society has circulated 117,000, with very encouraging results. The receipts for the year 1879 amounted to £73 7s. 5d. Addresses in support of the movement were given by several friends.

— The Shropshire Association held its annual meetings at Wyle Cop Chapel, Shrewsbury, on Monday and Tuesday last week. Mr. Joseph Morgan presided and delivered his address upon Baptist progress Fifty years ago, he said, that Association numbered only 13 chapels and 438 members, whereas now it represents 1,192 members, 2,456 scholars, and there was a chapel in almost every village of the county. With a view to aid Home Mission work, it was resolved to hold a series of gatherings at the various churches in succession, to be concluded by a special evangelistic service, and a quarterly exchange of pulpits by the ministers was agreed to. The Rev. T. Jenkins, of Madeley, was elected president for the ensuing year.

— On Sunday, June 6th, a large congregation assembled in Woodborough-road Chapel, Nottingham, to hear the farewell sermon of the Rev. F. G. Buckingham, who is leaving for Australia next month. On the following Tuesday a large number of friends assembled for tea, after which a public meeting was held, at which Mr. Councillor Lindley occupied the chair. Addresses were given by the Rev. T. Goodby, B.A. (President of Chelwell College), E. Medley, B.A. (Derby-road Chapel), F. A. Holtzhausen (New Basford Chapel), expressive of their high esteem of the Christian character of Mr. Buckingham, and the valuable work he had accomplished. A purse of money and a valuable book were presented to Mr. Buckingham in the course of the evening.

— The annual meetings of the Suffolk and Norfolk Strict Baptist Association was held at Stowmarket on Tuesday and Wednesday, 1st and 2nd inst., in the large tent of the Association. Mr. Brown, of Friston, acted as moderator at the meeting on Tuesday, when the reports of the several churches were read. In the afternoon Mr. R. Sears, of Fyots Cray, preached, and in the evening Mr. Meeres, of London. On Wednesday morning, at six o'clock, and again at nine, prayer meetings were held. At eleven o'clock Mr. C. Hill, of Stoke Ash, preached, and in the afternoon Mr. Dexter, of Grandisburgh, preached. There was a large concourse of Strict Baptists from all parts of the country present, and the people of Stowmarket, of all denominations, united to make the visitors' stay both pleasant and agreeable.

— On Monday afternoon Mr. E. S. Robinson laid the memorial stone of a new chapel to be erected at Totterdown, Bristol, upon the site of one burnt down some thirty years ago, and then under the pastorate of the Rev. W. Monck. The church at Broadmead has taken up the present movement, and the Rev. E. G. Gange has already collected about £1,700, including £500 by his church; Messrs. E. S. and A. Robinson, £200; J. Robinson, £100; G. Pine, £100; C. Wathen and several others, £50 each; Dr. Gotch and others, £25 each. The sitting accommodation to be afforded will be for 520 persons, and provision will be made for galleries to hold 300 more. The Revs. A. Thomas, U. R. Thomas, and others took part in the stone-laying service, and several ministers spoke at an evening public meeting, under the presidency of Mr. Carlile.

— The annual meetings of the Worcestershire Association were held at Astwood-bank, on Tuesday and Wednesday last week, and were well attended. At a public meeting on Tuesday, under the presidency of Mr. W. Avery, the Revs. J. Lewitt, of Worcester, spoke on "Aids to inward Spiritual Life," and W. Hobbs, of Tenbury, on "The Duty of an outward Christian profession." At the Conference, on Wednesday, the Rev. W. Radburn, of Henley in Arden, presided, and the Rev. W. V. Smith, of Evesham, read the Association letter on "The duty and importance of private study of the Scriptures;" followed by discussion. The subject of the public exposition of the Scriptures was also introduced and discussed. At the afternoon session the Church statistics were submitted. The present numbers were—1,727 members; 3,292 scholars; 377 teachers; 55 village preachers; and 27 village stations; the increase in membership being 25. The Rev. A. Murrell preached the closing sermon.

— The annual meetings of the Suffolk and Norfolk Home Missionary Union were held at Burlington Chapel, Ipswich, on Thursday, June 10. Mr. E. Roe, of Framden, the president for the year, occupied the chair at the morning meeting, and delivered an address. The secretary, the Rev. T. M. Morris (the pastor of Burlington Chapel), read the annual report. Grants were afterwards voted to the beneficiary mission churches to the amount of £25, and £2 2s. to the Baptist Union. An afternoon conference was held in the chapel on a paper read by Rev. W. Emery, of Turret-green Chapel, Ipswich, on "Our Sunday schools in relation to the Church, with special reference to the retention of our elder scholars, and the education and oversight of our young church members." A public meeting was held in the evening, when addresses were delivered by the Rev. W. Cumming, of Bines, the Rev. W. Haines, of Eye, and the Rev. W. Sampson, the secretary of the Baptist Union. The next annual meeting was appointed to be held at Diss, and Mr. E. Holton, of Bines, was elected chairman for the year.

— On Monday and Tuesday were held at Yeovil the triennial meetings of the Independent Baptist Churches of the Western and Devon Association, embracing the counties of Devon, Somerset, and Dorset. The Western Association celebrates its fifty-seventh year of meeting, and the Devon Association its twenty-ninth year, although of the former association there is a recorded existence of 250 years. In 1853 it numbered 27 pastorates, 1,785 members, 1,759 scholars, 240 teachers, and 22 preaching stations. Last year the churches were 25; membership, 2,330; teachers, 446; scholars, 4,171; and this year there has been an encouraging advance. The Devon Association numbers 44 pastorates, 43 churches, 5,400



members, 940 teachers, and 9,431 children, with chapel accommodation for 24,000 persons. On Monday the Rev. Evan Edwards, B.A., of Torquay, conducted a children's service. On Tuesday the Rev. G. W. Humphreys, B.A., of Wellington, delivered the president's address on "Preaching," and in the evening a largely-attended meeting was held, under the presidency of Mr. A. Groser, of Plymouth.

#### PRESBYTERIAN.

— Rev. Dr. Watson, Moderator of the Established General Assembly, conducted Divine service at Balmoral Castle on Sunday in presence of the Queen, Princess Beatrice, and the Princesses Victoria and Elizabeth of Hesse, and the Royal household. Rev. Dr. Watson and the Rev. A. Campbell subsequently dined with the Queen.

— Rev. S. R. Macphail, late of Glasgow, was on Thursday last inducted to the pastorate of Canning-street Church, Liverpool, vacant by the death of the Rev. Joseph E. Welsh. At a dinner, which took place previous to the ceremony, Mr. W. P. Lockhart remarked that Mr. Macphail's would be the first induction of a minister in the City of Liverpool, for the "other bishop" was not to be consecrated until the morrow.

— By a supplementary bazaar held during three days last week, St. Andrew's congregation, Gravesend (Rev. R. B. Bagnall's), £1,074 has been raised for church debt. The greater part of this sum was, however, collected at the previous bazaar in December last.

— Rev. Dr. Hutton, of Paisley, and the Rev. Alexander Oliver, of Glasgow, who attended the Liberation Conference in London last week, on Thursday morning breakfasted with the Premier in Downing-street.

— The bicentenary of the Covenanting struggle will be celebrated throughout Scotland on the 22nd inst.

— It was stated at the recent meeting of the Free Church Assembly that Sir Henry Moncrieff is the only Free Church minister who studied at Oxford. Thomas Gregory, writes a correspondent, a graduate of that University, was admitted as a Student of Divinity by the late Free Church General Assembly. The Rev. James E. Walker, M.A. (Oxon), minister at Cheltenham, was admitted by the General Assembly into the ministry of the Established Church of Scotland. Mr. Walker is a son of the late Rector of Cheltenham. The Rev. John Leal, formerly Wesleyan Minister at Oxford, and a student at that University, was admitted by the recent Synod into the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of England. The Rev. Mr. Johnston, parish minister of Harry, Orkney Isles, and the Rev. Professor Paterson, M.A., of the United Presbyterian College, Edinburgh, also were students at Oxford. Rev. Mr. Basely, D.C.L. (Oxon), has opened a Presbyterian Church at Oxford.

— Under the heading "Pistols for Two," an American newspaper says:—"During a heated discussion in the Reformed Synod at Pittsburg, Mr. Woodside took offence at Mr. Boulton's remarks, and said he should hold him accountable outside. Mr. E. replied that he was ready for him."

— The Southern General Assembly (American) has appointed the Rev. Allen Wright, a Choctaw Indian preacher, one of its delegates to the Philadelphia General Council.

— The General Assembly meeting at Charleston, U.S.A., has decided that only males are eligible to membership in the Presbyteries.

— The remains of the late Dr. MacGill, whose death in Paris we announced last week, were interred in the Necropolis at Glasgow on Friday. Services at the grave were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Jeffrey.

— The deaths are announced of—Rev. Dr. Liddell, minister of Lochmaben parish, formerly principal of the Royal College, Kingston, Canada, who recently celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination; Rev. Dr. Blair, for forty-two years pastor of the West United Presbyterian congregation, Galashiels; Rev. Dr. Edalle, formerly for thirty-seven years minister of the parish of Rescobie, who published a volume entitled "Natural History, by a Rural D.D.," Rev. A. Mackenzie, parish minister of Logie-Easter since 1818.

— Rev. Robert Dickson has been inducted to the charge of St. David's, Glasgow; Rev. G. E. Troup has been elected colleague and successor to the Rev. David Thornburn, Free South Church, Leith; Rev. C. D. Kay, of Innerleithen, has been inducted to the pastorate of Comrie Free Church.

— On Sunday evening Dr. Thain Davidson preached his monthly sermon to young men in Inlington Church, which was filled to overflowing, the aisles and pulpit stairs being crowded. The subject selected was "Solomon." A collection amounting to £50 was taken in aid of the Hospital Fund. In the afternoon Dr. Davidson made an appeal on behalf of the hospitals of London at the Agricultural Hall, where a large congregation assembled.

— At Clapham-road Church on Sunday morning, Dr. McEwan preached on behalf of the London Hospitals, from the words "Sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." The collection amounted to £63, but it had been previously arranged, in consideration of the many cases from Dr. MacEwan's Mission District treated in St. Thomas' Hospital, that the half of the sum collected should go to that institution. St. Thomas' does not participate in the Metropolitan Fund.

— The Liverpool Presbytery met on Monday—Rev. R. H. Ludie, Moderator. Mr. Samuel Stitt gave notice that at the next meeting he would call attention to the duty of securing as far as possible the parity of representation of ministers and elders in the committees of the Presbytery, and propose some method for accomplishing this object as well as to promote a more general interest in the work of the Presbytery. Moderation in a call was fixed to take place in Sefton-park Church on the 24th inst. It was mentioned that before a minister was settled in all probability the entire debt on the handsome new church would be cleared off. Rev. J. Muir made a statement respecting the sustentation fund. Rev. H. T. Howat gave in a report adverse to the opening of a preaching station at Walton in the meantime, and the matter was left in the hands of the Church Extension Committee.

— The annual collection for the Hospital Fund in St. John's Church, Forest-hill, after the forenoon

service, amounted to £84. The Rev. Dr. Boyd preached on Christ as the great Physician.

— The eleventh anniversary of the opening of Camp-hill Church, Birmingham (Rev. J. M. McKerrrow, B.A., minister), has just been celebrated. Sermons were preached by the Rev. Dr. MacEwan, the collections amounting to over £12.

— In another column will be found a sketch of the proceedings in connection with Dr. Gibson's settlement at St. John's-wood. Dr. Gibson has certainly found as warm hearts in England thus early as any he left behind him in Chicago.

— The second annual meeting of the Regent-square branch of the Children's Medical Missionary Society (better known as "The Girls' Dorcas"), was held in the Lecture Hall of the church on Monday evening. Mr. M. Ambler presiding. From the report read by Miss Ambler we gather that the association number seventy-one members. As the result of their monthly meetings for work, a large number of articles of clothing, &c., were shown, including two suits for the African boy "Bob," at Lake Nyassa. Suitable addresses were delivered by the chairman, Rev. Dr. Oswald Dykes, Rev. Mr. Jeffrey, and Messrs. Turnbull, Whyte, Whitewright, and Raymond. It was agreed that the garments made should be divided between the Mildmay Mission, Old Kent-road, and Mrs. Ranyard's Nursing Institute, and that the toys should be given for the use of the children at Holiday House.

— From the Sydney Presbyterian just to hand, we learn something of the reception accorded the Rev. J. M. Ross, late of London, on his arrival at the Antipodes. "The Scots," says our contemporary, "which brought the Sustentation Fund Secretary had scarcely let go her anchor in Sydney Harbour, till she was boarded by members of committees, who hastened to accord to him and his hearty welcome to the colony. The public meeting held to welcome Mr. Ross, and to inaugurate the work he has been brought out to do, was such as to leave no doubt about the earnestness and influence which he may rely upon to sustain and encourage him in carrying out his confessedly heavy undertaking. It is not often, if ever before, that we have seen gathered together on a Presbyterian platform in this colony representatives of so much influence and wealth, met to countenance and support a great Presbyterian movement, the importance of which it is difficult to over-estimate. The improvement of the position of our ministers, the consolidation and prudent extension of the Presbyterian Church in this colony, is a work which is worthy of and demands the best energies which can be brought to bear upon it. It is in the highest degree honourable to the influential laymen of the Church to rally, as they are doing, around this movement. The speeches of those who spoke at the meeting show real interest and hearty sympathy, and are a pledge of genuine support. If the same spirit be manifested throughout the Church, we believe the secretary will not find his work difficult."

#### WESLEYAN.

— A new chapel has been opened at Nottingham. The Rev. E. E. Jenkins, M.A., the Rev. Gervase Smith, D.D., the Rev. G. Osborn, D.D., Rev. T. H. Ingram, Rev. J. Clifford, L.L.B. (Baptist), J. Roberts, B.A. (Independent), Rev. Donald Fraser, and others, were the preachers. The building is Gothic in style, and will accommodate 1,000 worshippers. The site, which is an excellent one, cost £2,000, and the building about £7,000, of which sum £5,000 has been secured.

— At the recent Convention in connection with the Thanksgiving Fund, Sir Francis Lyett promised an additional contribution of £500, if a grant were made from the fund, for a chapel at Mile-end. We believe that some of those who have been workers in the cause of Methodism in East London are likely to make an earnest effort to promote such a scheme.

— At Church-street, Salisbury, the chapel anniversary has been celebrated. On Sunday, two sermons were preached by the Rev. J. E. Hargreaves, and on the following Thursday the Rev. E. A. Telfer, of London, preached in the afternoon and lectured in the evening (subject, "The Spanish Armada"). The proceeds, including profits of tea-meeting, exceeded £28.

— At Wymondham, Attleborough Circuit, a successful chapel anniversary has been held. The erection of the chapel (completed last November) cost £1,047, and the building is now nearly free from debt. Mr. W. F. Rayson, of Attleborough, secured the site, and rendered great service in promoting the work. The congregation and society are increasing, and a lay agent is employed.

— The jubilee of the Wesleyan Chapel at Tint-whistle has been celebrated amid much rejoicing. At the public meeting held on the occasion, Mr. Peter Taylor (formerly of this place, now of Ashton-under-Lyne), presided, and the Revs. J. Oddy and M. P. Gilbert, Messrs. J. Sellars, W. Hall, R. Marshall, J. Cox, J. Nelson, and others, gave addresses. On the Sabbath there was a procession through the village, and sermons were preached by Mr. O. O. Noel, of Ashton, the evening service being held in the Independent Chapel.

— The Isle of Man district meeting was held at Ramsey. The reports as to membership showed a small increase, and those referring to financial matters indicated progress. New chapels had been opened at Ronague and Sineal, and the Thomas-street Chapel, Douglas, had been enlarged and improved, while another chapel was being built at Barregarrow, and a schoolroom is to be erected at Ballaknane. The temperance report stated that the number of Bands of Hope had increased.

— At Old Market-street, Bristol, a tea was recently provided for the members of the Working Men's Meeting. About 160 members have joined this society during the six or seven months of its existence. Mr. Parsons, lay missionary, is the president.

— At Dunvant, near Swansea, a small chapel is to be erected in connection with the English-speaking congregation. At a recent meeting in aid of the fund, Mr. John Angel presided. The sum of £40 has been promised in aid of the building fund.

— Very successful missionary services have been held during the past two months in the Channel Islands. The Rev. John Scott, from Ceylon, and the Rev. John Allsopp, from Natal, have taken part in a number of the meetings; and in the French department Pastor Gallaud, of Thiers, France, and Pastor Cornforth, of the Theological Institution at Lausanne,

Switzerland. The "open door" now presented for evangelistic work in France formed a subject of frequent comment in the addresses delivered.

Mr. J. SPENCER CURWEN has been unanimously elected to the presidency of the Tonic Sol-fa College in the place of his father, the late Rev. John Curwen. This is not only a graceful act on the part of the Council, but it will serve the interests of the institution in the best possible way.

Mr. HERBERT THOS. DICKSEE (late a pupil in the City of London School) has (says the *City Press*) succeeded in gaining the "Slade Scholarship" of £50 per annum for three years in the Slade School of Art, University College. This is the second time in three years that this scholarship has been carried off by a former pupil in the drawing classes of the City of London School.

THE NEW TESTAMENT REVISION.—The revisers of the Authorized Version of the New Testament met on Tuesday in the Jerusalem Chamber, Westminster Abbey, for their hundredth session. The company, numbering fifteen members, were engaged in considering proposals made with a view of securing harmony of rendering.

#### BRITISH EQUITABLE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

The twenty-fifth annual general meeting was held on the 27th ult., at the office, 4, Queen-street-place, City, Mr. F. J. Hartley, chairman of the Company, presiding.

The Managing Director, Mr. WILLIAM SUTTON GOVER, read the following report:—

"Notwithstanding that the deplorable depression of trade has fallen with maximum force on the classes assuring with this Company, and, as a consequence, has slightly decreased the new business of the Company, and increased the amount of surrenders and of loans on policies, yet the results of the working of the Company are in the highest degree satisfactory. The directors have to report that 2,925 new policies have been issued, assuring £403,652, and producing a new annual premium income of £12,155. The total amount assured by 24,525 policies in force is £4,491,837, the annual premium income thereon being £137,235. The income of the twenty-fifth year from premiums was £132,955, and from interest £28,214 making the revenue of the year £161,169. Of this sum, after deducting all out-goings, £61,237 was added to the accumulated fund, which now amounts to £685,703. The amount paid for death and matured claims and bonuses was £56,477, and for surrenders £6,370. In the cardinal points, therefore, of lowness of mortality, growth of interest, and magnitude of accumulated fund, the results are most satisfactory. The directors again acknowledge the valuable support rendered by the policyholders to the extension of the Company's operations. As all have the power to introduce one new policyholder a year, all should use that power for their own good and that of the Company. The directors regret the somewhat sudden loss of Mr. Carr-Jackson. They have elected Mr. W. Clapton, F.R.C.S., and Mr. A. P. Gould, M.D., to fill the vacancy."

THE MANAGING DIRECTOR then referred to the foundation of the Company in the year 1854, under the chairmanship of his father, William Gover. Twenty-five years had since passed, and they now had in round numbers four-and-a-half millions assured on excellent lives, a premium income of £135,000, nearly £700,000 laid by—(applause)—and an interest revenue approaching £30,000. At eight divisions of profits they had declared a reversionary bonus averaging 11 per cent., and they had adhered to every principle laid down at the formation of the Company. One of the original directors was still with them, and it was his privilege for the twenty-fifth time to place before the annual meeting an exposition of the Company's affairs. (Cheers.) He would first give them the financial and statistical results of the twenty-fifth year, and then glance at the five periods of five years each, showing the steady and remarkable growth of the Company, the greatness of its prosperity, and the satisfactory elements of its still greater growth and still further success. Trade depression had fallen with maximum force on classes assured in the Company, and from which it derived its new business, and by contracting their means had rendered them less able to take out life assurances or to maintain those in force, and in some companies had decreased the ratio of new business 50 per cent. Notwithstanding that depression, the results of the year's working had been in the highest degree satisfactory. We have granted new assurances under 2,925 policies for the amount of £403,652; the premium income from which amounts to £12,155, the average amount per policy being just below £200, the average rate per cent. £3 6s. 2d., the average premium per policy, £8. Our assurance in force at the end of twenty-five years are 54,525 policies, assurances and bonuses £4,491,837, and the annual premiums £137,235. (Cheers.) Glancing at the balance sheet the principal items are—of income; premiums, £132,955. Interest, £28,214. This is about 41 per cent. on the accumulated fund as it stood at the commencement of the year. The premiums and interest added together give the revenue of the year, £161,169. The main items on the other side are for payments under policies. Claims, £56,477; surrenders, £6,370; which, with £41 paid to annuitants, give a total paid under policies of £62,853. The shareholders' interest amounts to £2,750, the commission to £9,882, the expenses to £23,702. We have laid by out of our revenue £61,237, which, added to the accumulated fund, £621,466 at the commencement of the year, increases the accumulated fund to £685,703. I may say in passing that as a quarter of a year has elapsed since the 31st January, the accumulated fund exceeds as I speak £700,000. (Cheers.)

The claims are a little under 421 per cent. of the premiums, the expenses and commission added together 231 per cent. The claims and expenses added together amount, therefore, to 67.72 per cent. Now, while the expenses have decreased from 34 to 251 per cent. in the last ten years, the claims have increased in about a similar proportion. The average amount of our claims and expenses for ten years has been 63.1 per cent., a remarkably steady series, with very little fluctuation. Now, it is a satisfactory point of view in the position of the Company that, although our business is small in the average amount of the policies, and is on that very account more expensive to get and to work than if the policies were larger, yet the high selection of life and how

rate of mortality more than make up to the Company such increase of expense. I have before me a long list of the "claims and expenses" of offices in their twenty-fifth year; the number of those offices is twenty-two. The list comprises a number of the most successful offices of the day, and the claims and expenses range from 53 to 160 per cent. of the premiums; there are, moreover, only four offices whose united claims and expenses are lower than our own, and in every one of these cases there are special circumstances which make those offices exceptions to the general rule. (Hear, hear.) I have a list of the percentages of claims to premiums of a large number of offices in their twenty-fifth year, and it is most remarkable that the percentage of claims to premiums of a large number of these offices exceeds our percentage of claims and expenses added together. The expenses are being steadily reduced, the reduction being in the last year 11 per cent.; and while the Company is not starved by an insufficient outlay for new business, it is felt to be of the greatest importance to reduce the expenses to a minimum. The surrenders, on which we have paid £6,370, show an increase on the former year, partly, perhaps, because the policies are gradually growing older, but likewise because many persons have been obliged either to take a loan on their policies to enable them to pay up the premium and maintain the policies in force or to surrender their policies. Still, the amount bears but a small proportion to the premium revenue, and will be found to be less in proportion to the amount assured than in the average of offices of a similar age. (Cheers.) We have laid by £61,237. This is a large amount both positively and relatively, and I notice that it is a steady amount; for instance, the year before it was £60,698, the year before £63,678, the year before £60,235; thus our accumulated fund at the end of our twenty-first year, when we came of age, was £439,842, and in the last four years it has increased to £685,703. It is marching on with hasty strides to a million, which, we believe, will soon be attained. The investments of the year have amounted to £21,810, and the average rate of interest 41 per cent. It is of immense importance to a life office that its funds should be both safely and profitably invested. Our agents' balances, nearly the whole of which have since been paid, amount to about 41 per cent., and I think we may congratulate ourselves upon the solid and profitable character of our investments. (Hear, hear.) Looking again at the amount of the accumulated fund, I perceive it amounts to 571 per cent. of the total gross premiums received during the twenty-five years, and it would amount to a much larger proportion of the net premiums received; so that, while the Company has paid its way, it has paid away half a million in death claims, has given liberal surrender values for discontinued policies, and has paid the working expenses; besides declaring eight divisions of profit of an amount above the average. It has this very respectable and growing sum still in hand. The claims of the year have been about 332 in number, and these policies have not been merely paid in full, but with a large addition in many cases for profits. Here you have the good done in the practical working of a prudently managed life office. Calculate how many families are saved from the abyss by the provision of life insurance in one office, and then take into account the number of life offices, and see what an influence there is in life assurance for national good. The fact that in the twenty-five years nearly one-half of the total policies issued have terminated by death, surrender, &c., places in a striking light the necessity for a continual recuperation by new business which fills up the losses in the ranks, increases the total number and strength, and by the constant infusion of newly-selected lives in large bodies reduces the mortality and increases the profits of the Company. (Hear, hear.) I have the amount laid by in the twenty-fifth year by twenty companies, and I find the average is £49,580, while ours was £61,237. Mr. Gover then glanced at the position of the Company at each quinquennial from its commencement, and said they had issued altogether: 48,153 policies, assuring £8,595,976, and an annual premium income £234,260, of which we have in force at the end of our twenty-fifth year rather more than half—viz., 24,525 policies, £1,491,837 assured, annual premium income £137,235. We have paid in death claims and bonuses in all £57,972, and the accumulated fund at the end of the twenty-fifth year amounted to £685,703, more than twenty-seven times as much as at the end of the fifth year. (Cheers.)

Mr. Gover then pointed out how the constitution and working of the Company gave to the policyholder the maximum benefit to be derived from life assurance, so that he had the highest inducement to increase the numbers of the policyholders of the company, and in conclusion said: "A life assurance company has its aids and hindrances, yet the path of our company's life has been one of great prosperity. We adhere to the old landmarks, we maintain the old principles. We fight under the old flag, and there is enough vitality left in the Company to place it in the front rank, foremost in the amount of business, foremost in the lowness of mortality, foremost in the magnitude of bonuses, foremost in wealth and honour. To all these you must lend your helping hand. There is no policyholder who cannot get another policyholder to join in our twenty-sixth year. Let us be discontented with the present in order that we may secure a higher future, and let us spare neither thought nor speech nor labour to make the British Equitable Assurance Company the first assurance company in existence." (Great applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN, in proposing the adoption of the report, said that he had examined into it and must express his great satisfaction with it. He found that the amount of business done during the past year was £403,000. They would rather the amount of new assurances had been £500,000, for half a million sounded well; but the classes the Company went amongst had suffered from the depressed state of trade, and he thought they had reason to be thankful that they had done so well. (Cheers.) Out of sixty-seven offices only eighteen had done a larger amount of business during that period. As to the new business having been secured at a reasonable price, he found it had been secured at 61 per cent. less expense than five years ago—(cheers)—showing that they had really reduced the expenses, as they still meant to do. Only ten out of ninety offices expended smaller amounts, whilst seventy-eight expended larger sums; and in the case of thirty-nine offices, all the premiums received were swallowed up in the expense of securing new business. As to the position of the Company to meet its claims, that was all that could be desired. They had an accumulated fund of nearly three quarters of a million sterling, and with the share capital nearly one million sterling, to meet the claims of the policyholders, so that there was not the slightest ground for fear in that respect. He congratulated the meeting on the very satisfactory position of the Company, and trusted that by their united exertions it would be raised to a still higher position in the future. (Cheers.)

Mr. DALE (director) seconded the adoption of the report. Mr. SMITH said that no life office could be safer and sounder than the British Equitable. He congratulated the share and policyholders on the soundness of investments of the Company, and of their improving character. The return in the way of interest of 41 per cent. was very satisfactory. They were, he believed, building up the Company all round to a great success.



Mr. JAS. CLARKE (proprietor and editor of the *Christian World*), as one of the auditors, testified as to the very admirable manner in which all the books were kept, and as to the deeds and vouchers being in perfect order. Every inquiry was always satisfactorily answered, and everything was as well in order as the auditors could possibly wish. (Applause.)

The report was unanimously adopted. Mr. FOUNTAIN J. HANLEY, the retiring director, was re-elected, as were also Mr. W. S. GOVER, the retiring managing director, and Mr. JAS. CLARKE, the retiring auditor.

Votes of thanks were then unanimously accorded to the medical officers, to the agents, and to the solicitor, Mr. H. GOVER, who then proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman and directors, with the addition that the portrait of the chairman should be painted at the expense of the Company for the board-room, both of which propositions, after being seconded by Dr. MENZ, were unanimously agreed to.

Mr. W. G. LEMON and the CHAIRMAN briefly returned thanks, and the latter gentleman expressed himself as highly esteeming the honour proposed to be conferred upon him.

Mr. SIMMONDS moved, and Mr. BULFORD seconded, a vote of thanks to the auditors, Mr. Fairley, and the officers of the staff, which was agreed to, and suitably acknowledged by Mr. JAS. CLARKE and Mr. FAIRLEY, and the proceedings then terminated.

#### BIRTHS.

BROWN.—June 10, at Framden, near Stonham, Suffolk, the wife of the Rev. S. B. Brown, of a daughter.  
BUNBURY.—June 10, at Alpha-villas, Farnborough, the Lady Harriett Bunbury, of a daughter.  
CARLILE.—June 13, at Wimbledon, the wife of Stephen Green Carlile, of a daughter.  
COTTON.—June 11, at The Cloisters, Westminster, the wife of the Rev. H. Aldrich Cotton, of a son.  
KETO.—June 14, at the Rectory, Whitechapel, the wife of the Rev. John P. Kito, of a son.  
LEGG.—June 13, at Osterham-village, Surrey, the wife of the Rev. James Legge, of a son.  
MCCOMAS.—June 13, at Marton Vicarage, near Rugby, the wife of the Rev. Charles Edward Archibald McComas, of a son.  
THUNDER.—June 14, at Cricklewood, N.W., the wife of Carter Thunder, of a son.  
WALKER.—June 13, at 33, Highbury-quadrant, N., the wife of the Rev. C. F. Walker, M.A., of a son.

#### MARRIAGES.

ADAMS.—June 9, at the Moravian Church, London, by the father of the bride, S. Hoppus Adams, M.D., of Bedford, to Caroline, youngest daughter of the Rev. John England, of Finsbury-park, London.  
BAKER.—June 13, at Hare-court Congregational Church, Canonbury, by the Rev. W. M. Statham, William Baker, Sherborne House, Dalton, to Eliza Sophia, youngest daughter of the late Mr. John Smith, of Winchester.  
CARSON.—June 3, at the church of St. Alphage, Greenwich, by the Rev. Alan H. Watts, David Carson, of New-cross-road and St. Paul's-place, Islington, to Annie, second daughter of the late Mr. Henry Penfold, of Brighton.  
DAVIES.—June 3, at Highbury Congregational Church, Cheltenham, W. H. Davies, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. Lon., and L.S.A., son of W. J. Davies, Esq., J.P., R.C.S., of Penner House, near Newport, Mon., to Amelia, daughter of the late T. B. Batchelor, Esq., of Newport, Mon.  
ENSON.—June 5, at the Cathedral, St. Alban's, J. D. Enson, of Kilburn, to Florence Blanche, daughter of the late J. A. Dorant, Esq., solicitor, of St. Alban's.  
GUNN.—June 9, at Regent-square Church, London, by the Rev. H. Mayo Gunn, of Sevenoaks (father of the bridegroom), Ernest Henry Mayo Gunn, of Bedford-park, Chiswick, and Leadenhall House, City, to Edith Mary, second daughter of the late W. T. Toms, Esq., of Chard, Somerset.  
HARBERY.—June 10, at East Finchley Congregational Church, by the Rev. S. W. McAll, M.A., Benjamin Harber, of Woodgate, Highbury New-park, to Janet Orme, eldest surviving daughter of R. M. GILL, of Ormsfield, Finchley.  
HOPCRATT.—June 9, by license, at the Baptist chapel, Hook Norton, by the Rev. J. N. Smith, assisted by the Rev. H. S. Payne, Joseph Hopcratt, of Deddington, to Marianne, daughter of the late Edward Walford, of Hook Norton.  
INCE.—June 10, at the Baptist chapel, Melbourne, Australia, by the Rev. A. J. Clarke (formerly Evangelist at the Metropolitan Tabernacle), assisted by the Rev. W. C. Bunning, of Geelong, Edward George Ince, Baptist Minister of Echuca, Victoria, eldest son of Mr. George Ince, of Woodford, Essex, to Jane Catherine (Jennie), second daughter of Mr. J. Hubbard, London-road, South-west, S.E.  
JONES.—June 10, at St. Mary's Church, Hornsey, Ambrose, second son of George Jones, of Holloway-road and Wood-green, to Louisa, third daughter of Samuel Appleton, of Gloucester-road, Holloway.  
KENDON.—June 20, at the Baptist Mission House, Spanish-town, Jamaica, by the Rev. S. M. Geddes, Wesleyan Minister, Joseph James, eldest son of Rev. J. J. Kendon, Godthorpe, Kent, to Jessie Ann, only daughter of Alexander McHardy, of Aberdeen.  
LEIGH.—June 8, at the Unitarian Chapel, Bath, by the Rev. John Wright, B.A., George Highfield, eldest son of Henry Leigh, of Moorfield, Swinton, Lancashire, to Mary, second daughter of the late William Fitchett Caff, of Moorlands, Marlborough, Somerset.  
TAYLOR.—June 8, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, by the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, Thomas Hancock Lake Tanton, son of James Tanton, of Great Torrington, N. Devon, to Hephzibah Agnes, eldest daughter of William Payne, of Guildhall, and 35, Kennington-road, S.E.

WILLIAMS.—June 9, at Nonconformist Chapel in Hallaton, Leicestershire, by the Rev. C. Williams, of Ac-  
erinton, Rev. C. B. Williams, of Oakham, to Anne, daughter of Mr. Baines, of Hallaton.

#### DEATHS.

BACON.—June 9, at Ilford Hall, Essex, Hannah Caroline, the beloved wife of Edward Bacon, aged 45 years, deeply lamented.  
BISHOPP.—June 8, in her 57th year, Emma Bishopp, Matron of the Royal Surrey County Hospital, Guildford.  
COCKER.—June 9, at the Vicarage, Stony Stratford, the Rev. G. W. Coker, vicar of the parish, aged 58.  
CRAWLEY.—June 9, at Southend-on-Sea, after a lingering illness, aged 54, Thomas Crawley, surviving four months the death of his only little girl (Maudie), aged 10 years.  
DUNK.—June 7, at Wokingham, Sarah Elizabeth, the dearly beloved wife of Nathan Noyes Dunn, formerly of Basingstoke, aged 73 years.  
FISK.—June 8, at the General Infirmary, Derby, whither he was taken after being seized in the street with apoplexy, Ishmael Fish, M.A., Vicar of Huttons Ambro, Yorkshire, aged 57 years.  
HASTED.—June 9, at Sproughton Rectory, aged 71, Henry John Hasted, for 31 years Rector of the above parish, Honorary Canon of Norwich, and late Rural Dean.  
MACDOUGALL.—June 10, at Gallanach, Oban, in the 92nd year of her age, Margaret, widow of Dugald MacDougall, Esq., of Gallanach, and daughter of the late Murdoch MacLaine, Esq., of Lochbury.  
MCLELLAN.—June 8, at No. 18, Dalrymple-road, Stockwell, in his 85th year, David James McLellan, formerly of Printing-house-square, and for many years one of the Common Council of the City of London.  
PEASE.—June 13, at Lucerne, Switzerland, on his return journey from the south of France, where he had been for his health, Edward Pease, Esq., of Greenroft, Darlington, second son of the late Joseph Pease, Esq., in his 46th year.  
PHILLIPS.—June 10, the Rev. Alfred Phillips, D.D., sometime Principal of King William's College, Isle of Man, and of Cheltenham College, and formerly of Henwick House, Worcester, aged 78.  
ROLLINGS.—May 10, at 82, Newman-street, Oxford-street, London, Miriam, the younger surviving daughter of Alex. Rollings.  
STARR.—June 13, Elizabeth Hester, the beloved wife of John Starr, Secretary of the Monthly Tract Society, 5, New Bridge-street, E.C., aged 73.  
STRANSON.—June 11, Ann, the beloved wife of John Stranson, of Uxbridge, aged 68.  
TAYLOR.—June 7, at her residence, Charlotte-street, Blackfriars-road, Rebecca, the beloved wife of B. Taylor, in her 70th year. After a constant life, gently fell asleep in Jesus. Greatly beloved by all.  
WARNER.—June 11, at All Saints' Hospital, Eastbourne, the Sister Anne Teresa (Anne Ratcliffe), eldest daughter of the late John Warner, Esq., of Leicester-gardens, Hyde-park, Barrister-at-law.

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EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR 1879

London University, First B.A. . . . . 1

" " Matriculation in Honours . . . 3

" " 1st Division . . . . . 3

Cambridge Local Examination, Seniors . . . 8

" " Juniors . . . . . 14

College of Preceptors, "First Class" . . . 6

" " Second " . . . . . 23

" " Third " . . . . . 14

\* With the 1st Prize for Mathematics.

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Cornwallis Gardens, Hastings.



# Chateau Lafite, Chateau Margaux,

## AND OTHER

### HIGH-CLASS VINTAGE CLARETS.

"There is nothing that people speak more often about," says the *Times*, "than Bordeaux Wine, and yet nothing perhaps, about which people are more ignorant. In the Upper Medoc there are three vineyards beyond criticism, Chateau Lafite, Chateau Margaux, and the Chateau Latour." "What a region it is! it was once ours," wrote Thackeray; "and why did we not keep it?" "I can now understand," continues the *Times* Paris correspondent, "how the Duc d'Aumale, when a young man, ordered the regiment he was commanding to present arms on passing Chateau Margaux. The Lafite I was better acquainted with than the Latour, so I uncovered on entering the Lafite cellars; but I uncovered with equal deference on leaving the Latour ones."

The consumption of the fine red Wines of the Medoc, which are in England known by the name of Claret, has made great progress during recent years, and has increased tenfold since the alteration of the duty in 1860. Their appreciation by the English people is a growing one, and likely to be continued. Much, however, depends upon the seasons for quality, and much again—seeing that these Wines differ even in good years—upon the selection.

"At Bordeaux," says the *Times*, "the good years are known by heart. Everybody knows that 1870, 1871, and 1876 were in general good years; and good years have long been denominated 'Englishmen's years.'"

The Clarets of 1876 Vintage have made extraordinary progress: they possess elegance, colour, vinosity, and good body, with a fine aroma, and will develop into magnificent Wines. Unfortunately, the yield was but comparatively small, and the quantity more than usually limited; the prices are, however, in consequence of the extraordinary productiveness of the years 1874 and 1875, unusually moderate.

Having regard to the high character of the Wines of 1876, we feel confident that at their present prices they will be found amongst the cheapest and best ever offered to the English consumer. We were among the first to recognise the merits of this Vintage, and to secure a large and varied Stock of the finest qualities; their genuineness is guaranteed, and samples can be had on payment, and the Wines can be tasted in our Cellars.

"The Bordeaux tasters," continues the *Times* correspondent, "keep the Wine a moment on the tongue, and then spit it out. I had some reluctance in tasting so exquisite a Wine in this way, but resigned myself to it; but I could not bring myself to deal thus with Lafite 1876, Chateau Margaux 1876, and Latour 1876—these I really drank, and they rewarded me for my deference by sparing my head."

We have the pleasure to state that with a view still further to develop the sale of these light, useful, and exquisite Wines in this country, we have just taken the whole of the extensive vaults lately in the occupation of Messrs. Henry Goss and Co. They now form a continuous portion of our already large premises, and give us a stupendous space for the storing and maturing of French Wines. We purpose shortly removing our offices and tasting rooms, for the greater convenience of Customers, to the other end of our premises.

In consequence of the partial failure of the 1879 Vintage, and the consequent scarcity of good sound Wines, a great rise in price has been established at Bordeaux upon all Wines of Vintages previous to that date. This, coupled with the ravages made by the dreaded Phylloxera, will, we fear, lead to the shipment of much spurious Wine to this market, and will necessitate much caution on the part of dealers generally, otherwise the high character which the light pure Wines of France have obtained in this country will suffer.

### HIGH-CLASS CLARETS, VINTAGE 1876.

			PER DOZEN
Chateau Margaux Grand Vin	(Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases)	Bottled Feb. 1879	46s. 0d.
Chateau Lafite Grand Vin	(Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases)	Bottled March 1879	48s. 0d.
Chateau Lafite Carruades	(Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases)	Bottled March 1879	41s. 0d.
Chateau Lafite 2d Vin	(Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases)	Bottled March 1879	35s. 0d.
Chateau D'Issan Grand Vin	(Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases)	Bottled Jan. 1879	31s. 6d.
Chateau Kirwan Grand Vin	(Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases)	Bottled Feb. 1872	31s. 6d.

### MAGNUMS.

Chateau Margaux Grand Vin	(Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases)	Bottled March 1879	92s. 0d.
Chateau Lafite Grand Vin	(Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases)	Bottled March 1879	96s. 0d.

### JEROBOAMS.

			EACH.
Chateau Margaux Grand Vin	(Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases)	Bottled March 1879	34s. 0d.
Chateau Lafite Grand Vin	(Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases)	Bottled March 1879	36s. 0d.

NOTE.—A Jeroboam contains about 8 Bottles, a Magnum 2 Bottles.

The above Prices are Net Cash, and include Bottles and Cases, but not Carriage.

### VINTAGE 1877.

Chateau Larose Grand Vin.—The finest Wine of the *seconds crus* of this year; a portion of this growth is now being bottled at the Chateau, the remainder is in our Cellars, where it can be seen.

Chateau D'Issan Grand Vin.—Will shortly arrive, and may be seen during the process of bottling at our Cellars.

			PER DOZEN
Chateau Latour Grand Vin	Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases.	Vintage 1873. Bottled Dec. 1876	48s. 0d.
Chateau Lafite Grand Vin	Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases.	Vintage 1873. Bottled Dec. 1876	48s. 0d.
Chateau Lafite Grand Vin	Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases.	Vintage 1872. Bottled Dec. 1874	48s. 0d.
Chateau Lafite Grand Vin	Bottled at the Chateau, and bearing the full Brand on Corks and Cases.	Vintage 1871. Bottled — 1874.	

The above Prices are Net Cash, and include Bottles and Cases, but not Carriage.

	Vintage	Bottled	Per dozen	Per dozen 1-bottles		Vintage	Bottled	Per dozen	Per dozen 1-bottles
Chateau Latour Grand Vin	1865	Nov. 1869	54s.	—	St. Julien	1876	Nov. 1878	21s.	12s.
Chateau Ducru Beaucaillou	1869	Nov. 1872	54s.	—	St. Estephe	1876	April 1879	18s.	10s.
Chateau Beychevelle	1869	Dec. 1872	44s.	—	Medoc	1876	Aug. 1879	16s.	9s.
Chateau Ducru Beaucaillou	1865	Jan. 1870	37s. 6d.	—	St. Emilion	1876	Oct. 1878	14s.	8s.
Chateau Calon Segur	1865	Feb. 1868	32s. 6d.	—	The Chancellor's Claret	1876	April 1879	13s.	7s. 6d.
Chateau D'Issan Grand Vin	1865	March 1871	32s.	—					
Chateau Grand Puy Ducases	1865	Feb. 1869	31s. 6d.	—					
Chateau Leoville Lascazes	1873	April 1877	30s.	16s. 6d.					
Chateau Kirwan Grand Vin	1876	Feb. 1879	30s.	—					
Chateau D'Issan Grand Vin	1876	Dec. 1878	30s.	16s. 6d.					
Chateau Barton Langoa	1876	Nov. 1878	30s.	16s. 6d.					
Chateau Brown Cantenac	1873	— 1876	30s.	—					
Chateau Pontet Canet	1873	— 1876	28s.	—					
Chateau Citran	1876	Feb. 1879	24s.	13s. 6d.					

The above Prices are Net Cash, Carriage free. Cases and Bottles will be charged for, the latter at 1s. per dozen; but both may be returned, when the prices charged will be allowed.

3, LIME STREET, LONDON, E.C.

H. R. WILLIAMS & Co., Importers.

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# SUPPLEMENT TO THE NONCONFORMIST & INDEPENDENT

THURSDAY, JUNE 17, 1880.

## THE TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE.

THE sketch given below will enable our readers to compare the past with the present. To be obliged to go back half an average life-time to discover the origin of any public movement is at first sight a little discouraging. We cannot fail to remember that in that interval other agitations for beneficial public objects have arisen, and have reached their consummation; though mainly because, like that for Free Trade, they have touched the material interests of the nation. With the Liberation movement it is otherwise. What there was in the nature of direct grievance has during the last generation almost vanished. By what slow processes, patient persistence, and sturdy conflicts this has been effected, is told elsewhere. The Statute Book and the annals of the British Parliament mark the successive and successful stages of the struggle towards Religious Equality. But the greatest change of all—that of public sentiment—can only be fully estimated by comparison. Even in our fragmentary retrospect of the course of ecclesiastical events since 1844—when the first Liberation Conference was held the predominant feature is the great and beneficent revolution that has taken place in public feeling. Measured by years it is simply astounding. It is hardly possible now to realise the extent to which ecclesiastical arrogance and intolerance forty years ago, and even still more recently, ruled the Legislature, pervaded our laws, and permeated society; and we are bound to say they are still crystallised in present-day Convocation debates. Though the system from which they flowed remains in theory intact, we are living in quite another atmosphere. This is, of course, due in a measure to the gradual increase of intelligence, the spread of education, and altered social relations. But thus much may be claimed for the Liberation Society—that, during this long interval, it has been directing these ameliorating forces into the right channel; that it has saturated the public mind with views of spiritual life which, answering to national aspirations, find a response in the heart and conscience of the community; and that it has carried on a great movement by quiet and persistent appeals to those higher instincts which have changed the opinions of the mass of the community with the smallest amount of friction. Thus it happens that now, when the Liberation Society is approaching the citadel of ecclesiastical injustice for the final assault, it is looked upon by all but interested partisans not as a revolutionary propaganda, but as a well-organised, pacific, teaching agency, that is preparing the way for an inevitable national reform.

In singing the requiem of the churchyard monopoly, the *Times*, the other day, rejoiced that Nonconformists would soon be left with nothing but a "sentimental grievance." If that had been a true description, no such assemblies as those which at the end of last week thronged the Cannon-street Hotel, and crowded the Metropolitan Tabernacle, could have been gathered together. Not a few staunch friends of the movement, seeing that a Liberal Government, which confessedly owed its position mainly to the zeal and energy of Nonconformists, was now in power, and that the Burials question was as good as settled, regarded a Liberation Conference at the close of so exciting and exhausting a campaign, as somewhat of a hazardous experiment. Those fears were effectually dissipated by the aspect of the great hall on Thursday morning; by the appearance on the platform of a larger phalanx of M.P.'s than ever put in an appearance on such an occasion; and by the number and quality of the delegates who responded to the invitation of the committee. If this mass of grey-headed veterans and earnest young men came from all parts of the country—from Land's End to John o'Groats—to mourn over a "sentimental grievance," there never was a case of greater infatuation. They had, indeed, in the political aspect of the times abundant cause for hearty congratulation. The flower of the forces, whose enthusiasm installed a Liberal Administration, was there not to endorse the maxim, "Rest and be thankful," but to gird themselves for new battles, and to take a new point of departure. Three well-attended sessions in the heart of the metropolis, that offers very tempting blandishments to country visitors—the third of which was as sustained in speaking and enthusiasm as the first—followed by a crowning demonstration in the Metropolitan Tabernacle unsurpassed in the experience of the Liberation Society, are evidence sufficient that the movement is as fully supported as ever. And as we watched the proceedings of the Conference, and

listened to the response of its deeply-interested members to the arguments and appeals put before them, we could not but draw the conclusion that this concentrated moral force would do for the nation at large what it had been enabled to accomplish for the Liberal party; and that ere long the *Times* would have to register its triumphs, and to swell the final chorus of victorious congratulation.

Nothing can better illustrate the ceaseless activity of the Liberation Society than the report of the Executive Committee; which, perhaps, on future occasions of the kind might with advantage be placed in the hands of the delegates, and "taken as read." While a Tory Government was paralysing national progress, the public mind perforce absorbed in foreign affairs, and all the great industrial interests of the community were suffering from prolonged depression, the seed was being sown broadcast. In these three years of general political stagnation, meetings and lectures to the number of 2,000 have been held in all parts of the country, and tracts, leaflets, and placards have been scattered abroad, amounting in the aggregate to 7,000,000. It is in such quiet, effective fashion that opinion in favour of Disestablishment, and as to the proper sphere of spiritual activities, has been ripening. In this great work of indoctrinating society with right principles—the elevating moral influence of which will, happily, long survive the occasion that called it forth—the society has never lacked the sinews of war. An expenditure of £81,000 during the last six years has set these varied agencies in motion, but a still larger outlay will be necessary in proportion as the movement assumes those national proportions that are the sure omen of speedy success.

The indications that the society is assuming this wider development have become increasingly manifest. The members of the Legislature who occupied the Cannon-street platform were hardly a tithe of those who endorse its objects. The principle of Religious Equality is represented in the Cabinet, and is recognised as one that must sooner or later come to the front in a practical form, not only by most Liberal politicians, but by the foremost Liberal statesmen of the day. They have, one and all—and it may be set down as a "great fact"—ceased to contest the equity and necessity of the change. It is only a question of time; and even so staunch a Church organ as the *Guardian* does not hesitate to warn its friends to prepare for the contingency. Although Nonconformists are—and will probably to the end be—the "backbone" of the Liberation movement, it is only needful to note the varied representation at last week's Conference, and the diverse opinions on other subjects held by some of the principal speakers, to see that this is no sectional agitation. The platform of the society has always been wide enough for national purposes, and it is now occupied by foremost men in political life, who are entirely outside the Dissenting world. The Liberal party, irrespective of creed and individual opinion, is now in close alliance with Nonconformists for the one common and paramount object—the separation of Church and State. Nor can it be otherwise if that end is to be realised by legislative action for the benefit of the entire population.

We do not think the sagacity of the leading Church organ in predicting that Disestablishment is one of the questions of the near future can be at fault. It may not be expedient, owing to the political exigencies of the time, formally to test the opinions of the present Parliament on the subject, or to do more than use the Legislature as a suitable platform from which the whole country may be addressed. By this and other means the Liberation Society will be able to carry out its cardinal object—to gain over public opinion. This action will never cease to be seasonable and necessary till the consummation is realised, and the lapse of every year, provided this teaching agency is in full operation, will more entirely prepare the nation for the great change. No one now regards that change as indefinitely remote. According to all probability the Scotch Establishment will be dealt with by our responsible statesmen after the next general election. Once opened, it can only be closed in one way, unless the Scotch people change their present views. As a practical Parliamentary question, the English State Church stands, as Mr. GLADSTONE says, in the rear. The inevitable extension of the county franchise, and as its corollary a redistribution of seats, will greatly augment popular power; and when the Liberation Society has won over the constituencies, as they are and will be, their work will be substantially accomplished. Towards these tangible objects the friends of Religious Equality will

work with all the more energy and self-sacrifice because the goal is definitely in sight. Among the mass of the people they have less to overcome antagonism than indifference, and to that end this successful Twelfth Triennial Conference will, we doubt not, be found to have contributed its full quota, for, besides enlightening a public prepared to listen to its claims, it has cemented the alliance between the active supporters of Religious Equality and the active section of the great Liberal party.

## THE LIBERATION CONFERENCES—AN HISTORICAL REVIEW.

WHEN the Children of Israel arrived within sight of the Promised Land, the Divine Lawgiver called upon them to consider in their hearts what great things had been wrought on their behalf since they set out on their long and toilsome pilgrimage from Egyptian bondage. The occurrence of the Twelfth Triennial Conference of the Liberation Society furnishes, in like manner, a not inappropriate juncture for a retrospect of the progress which has been made during the last forty years towards the goal of Religious Equality. In 1840 Nonconformists had begun to witness some of the results of the evil seed sown by the writers of the Oxford Tracts. Official clericalism, always sufficiently dominant and aggressive, had been quickened into renewed activity and increased audacity; and statesmen of both political parties were found only too supple in yielding to its insolent demands. Not only were the goods of Nonconformists "spoiled" by grievous Church-rate exactions—which Sir Herbert Jenner Fust decided would be valid if levied by two churchwardens and a minority, though a large majority of the ratepayers in vestry refused their sanction—but noble men like John Childs, of Bungay, John Thorogood, and William Baines, of Leicester, suffered long months of imprisonment under the galvanised action of the Ecclesiastical Courts. Among other incidents of those "bad old times," we note that at Hackney, in 1841, "a poor old blind beggar, who" might "be seen with his dog nearly every day in the New-road, waiting by the way-side for the benevolent to cast him their mites for his subsistence, was summoned" before the magistrates "for the sum of tenpence for the support of the richest Church Establishment in the world." In the parish of St. George, Colegate, Norwich, an offer by leading Dissenters to raise among themselves one-half of the amount required to keep the parish church in substantial repair, on condition that Church attendants provided in the same way the other half, was rejected, at the instigation of a committee of archdeacons; and five of the Dissenters who had shown this conciliatory spirit were, in an unprecedented manner, summoned before the Ecclesiastical Court, "touching and concerning their souls' health, and the careful correction and reformation of their errors and excesses"—the purpose being to establish the proposition that to vote against, or to refuse to vote for, a rate, was "a crime." Marriages celebrated by a minister "not in priests' orders," were declared by the House of Lords, in a suit to which the Primate of Ireland lent his active aid, to be invalid. In various parts of the country, notably at Colyton and Basingbourn, the State clergy set up the claim to refuse to read the Burial Service over persons who had been baptised by Nonconformist ministers, on the ground that "none but such as had been ordained by a bishop had any right to baptise." Debtors, in prison (whether Jews, Roman Catholics, or Nonconformists) were declared by the Home Secretary to be liable to punishment for non-attendance at worship according to the rites of the Church of England. The Tractarian vicar of Leamington disputed the right of the Church Pastoral-Aid Society to hold a meeting in Leamington without his permission; and a High Church curate took upon himself to inflict corporal chastisement upon a boy detected in the heinous offence of playing marbles in the street on Good Friday. By a proposed Church Maintenance Bill, the State-Church was to be exempted from the operation of the Mortmain Act, while Dissenters were left subject to it; and by Mackinnon's Bill for the health of towns, it was provided that Dissenters burying in the new burial-grounds, purchased and maintained by a parish rate, must pay a double fee—one, in every case, to the clergyman of the parish. The "leading journal" put forth a claim that all missions to the heathen sent forth from this country should be placed under the control of the State-Church clergy; and Lord John Russell could, at that time, find no better panacea for the restlessness of Ireland than an expansion of the State Church system, so as to admit the Roman Catholic bishops to share in the distinctions and emoluments enjoyed by the bishops of the Establishment. But the crowning effort of ecclesiasticism was the insolent attempt to obtain, under the powers of Sir James Graham's Factories' Education Bill, entire control of the youth of this country, who were to be trained in the principles of the Established Church, under clerical direction, at the cost of ratepayers of all religious views. At length Nonconformists threw off their apathy, and a movement was witnessed throughout the country of a character so irresistible, that, after Sir James Graham had made a weak attempt to break its force by his so-called "olive branch," this most objectionable measure had to be withdrawn.



It was at this crisis that the word went forth to Nonconformists to abandon the "bit by bit" policy of resistance, and to vigorously unite for the removal of the source of all this injustice and wrong, by the severance of the union between Church and State. "Certain it is," said Mr. EDWARD MIALI, who was the heart and soul of this new movement against the Church Establishment, "that the State-Church is now wide-awake. Every clergyman has become an agitator, not to defend, but to propagate, State-Church principles. Flinging Liberalism, which was for a brief period the idol of the day, to the winds, squires and squire's ladies, half-pay captains and thriving lawyers, stewards of the nobility and even lords themselves, are bent upon the extermination of the pestilent meeting-house heresy. All are engaged in preaching, as opportunity offers, the heinous sin of Dissent. And we poor cowering mortals content ourselves with saying, in trembling accents, that Dissent is justifiable; and this too frequently we say only among ourselves. This will never do. Not thus is the terrible evil to be put down. We must meet the foe with his own weapons. We must charge home upon the consciences of men. We must exchange the language of apology for that of rebuke. We must be as bold for the truth as they are bold for error—as restlessly active, as pertinaciously energetic. We must look upon it that we have a noble, but an arduous, mission to fulfil, and determine, at all hazards, to fulfil it." Mr. Miall, in an article published in 1841, the first year of the existence of the *Nonconformist*—which was established with the primary object of bringing about a separation of Church and State—described the new phase of the State-Church system which the Tractarian movement had initiated; and it will be seen that the interval which has since elapsed has in no way detracted from the correctness of the description. He had previously shown how cunningly contrived a mechanism for supporting class privileges was a body of clergymen trained "in the most exclusive spirit"—"to the aristocracy pledged servants, to their own flocks supreme dictators, not selected for spiritual aptitude, but owing their elevation in most instances to their connection with, or their former subserviency to, the aristocracy." "Intelligence," he observed, "is doing much to weaken the law defences of priestism. Time is filling in its moats and crumbling its walls. Already men talk aloud of levelling the fortification with the ground. But when did human nature, placed in an artificial position of superiority, ever resign it without a struggle? If the authority of the magistrate is found unequal to the task of guarding the privileges and wealth of the clergy, they are not the men to yield up their post until every means have been tried to secure it. Why not boldly laugh at the title they enjoy from the hand of the civil power, and forge a higher one—a title from heaven. There are fools enough in the world to be gulled by impudent pretensions, minds of feeble fibre, which cannot stand upright alone, and which cling to priestism as a support against the doubts which they are not strong enough to resist. This is the last resort of priestism—to assume a Divine commission, and place itself above the magistrate who has nursed it into power. The honours, the wealth, the authority of the Church must not be given up, at all events; and if law becomes too weak to secure them, another mode of defence must be superadded. Accordingly, we have Puseyism, apostolical succession, the supremacy of the Church, and all their cognate assumptions and absurdities. It is simply priestism calling down fire from heaven to protect its worldly possessions. It is a very old thing under a new guise. With all the art bestowed upon it to make it look like religion, it smells of the earth, earthy. What now is the end of it? The gratification of human lust of power. What one benefit is it intended to work out? To raise the clergy above the position of humanity, and make them demigods. To put understanding, conscience, affections, will—all that makes man man, into the hands of a body of proud, self-seeking priests, to be moulded and kneaded into the shape found to be most consistent with their designs."

Those who are fond of repeating the cuckoo cry that the Liberation movement is only an expression of the desire of Nonconformist ministers to advance their social position, are not, we must in charity assume, conscious of the difficulties thrown in the way of this new movement by leading ministers of the day, who, from their position, might have been regarded as most amenable to such susceptibilities. A proposition to hold, in 1844, "a Conference from all parts of the country for the purpose of seriously deliberating upon and adopting measures for promoting, by all Christian and constitutional means, the dissolution of the union between the Church and the State," was pronounced by several of these, at a meeting of the Bedfordshire Union, to be, "under present circumstances inexpedient, and calculated rather to retard than to forward the object it seeks to promote." The London Nonconformist ministers, with some exceptions, assumed a similar attitude. But it was soon manifest that this was not the view taken of the matter by the Nonconformist laymen (using the word in its popular meaning) throughout the country, or by the students for the ministry in the various collegiate institutions. "The organisation which serves as an engine of assault," said the Address of the Metropolitan Anti-State-Church Association, "will be equally efficient as a shield for our protection. Nay, the very circumstance of our taking upon ourselves the character of assailants is the best guarantee for our safety. To stand on the defensive is to invite attack; to attack is to place the enemy on the defensive." "We think that mere Nonconformity, how modest soever it may appear," said, with complete unanimity, the twenty-nine students of the Glasgow Theological Academy, in a published letter bearing the name of one who is now the honoured secretary of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, "does not fill up the measure of

Dissenters' duty, but that they are called upon actively to resist the unwarrantable encroachments of a State-endowed clergy, and that one great duty which they owe to the Head of the Church is the active employment of all the means which He has placed within their reach to destroy that incongruous relation of Church and State by which the Divine beauty of the former has been to such an extent obscured." After the "freaks of grasping faction" which had been recently witnessed, they regarded the duty as one which could no longer, "without sin, be neglected." The hearts of the students in the other colleges were found to be throbbing sympathetically. When the project of a Conference was first broached, the then organ of Society, the *Morning Post*, sneered superciliously at the thought that "a number of persons, to the amount of six dozen and four, who call themselves 'Protestant Dissenting ministers, residing in the Midland Counties,' are very desirous of a little co-operate agitation with their 'brethren' in the metropolis, for the modest and moderate purpose of severing the connection between Church and State!" But a more serious tone was soon found to befit the occasion, and the alarm was given that sacerdotalists must be prepared to take their part in "a second Puritan war."

At a representative meeting of ministers and laymen in the Midland Counties, held at Leicester, on Thursday, December 6, 1843, the project of a Convention was approved, a Provisional Committee of 120 leading men in different parts of the country was nominated, and in due time an Executive Committee was formed, of which Dr. Cox became the secretary; Dr. Price and Mr. Miall assisting in the preliminary arrangements. In the address which was issued, explanatory of the purposes of the Convention, the Executive Committee thus set forth the circumstances which seemed to them to render action at that crisis specially necessary. They remarked: "The agitation of this question on the Continent of Europe, the late disruption of the Scottish Church, the anarchy of Ireland, produced mainly by its religious Establishment, the Factories' Education Bill of last Session, the revival of High Church principles, the unconstitutional demands set up by ecclesiastical authorities, and the oppressive prosecutions upon which those authorities are once more venturing, the consequent awakening amongst Dissenters of a more serious regard for their principles, and a more earnest desire to see them recognised by the Legislature, all concur in pressing home the conclusion that the day has now arrived for seeking a dissolution of the alliance between Church and State, in a spirit of allegiance to the great Head of the Church." The response from the country was prompt and cordial. On the 30th of April, 1844, at the "Crown and Anchor" in the Strand, the Conference commenced its sittings, which were continued for three days. Among the 700 delegates who responded to the summons were Joseph Sturge, George Thompson, Sharman Crawford, M.P., Dr. Bowring, M.P. (Dr. Wardlaw was prevented by illness from attending, but sent a paper which he had prepared), John Childs of Bungay, John Burnet, William Brock, Dr. Pye-Smith, Dr. Young of Perth, Dr. Cox, Dr. Price, and Dr. John Campbell, who declared himself "almost a reluctant convert, but a real one." One evidence of the spirit in which the work was undertaken is afforded by the action of the provisional secretary, Dr. Cox, who after reading the paper which had been drawn up setting forth the order of proceedings, announced that he had hitherto been one of the dispensers of the *Regium Donum*, but he had determined that henceforth he would take no part in that distribution. Nor did the Conference blink the share which some Protestant Nonconformists had in State grants. In the resolutions which were adopted, the *Regium Donum* was distinctly marked out as among the abuses to the removal of which the delegates were by their principles pledged. A remark germane to the object of the Conference, uttered by Father Mathew, was, during the debate, reported by Mr. Trestrail, of Cork. "Sir," said that most successful Roman Catholic Temperance Reformer, "if you Protestants, when you came over to Ireland, instead of putting your trust in Acts of Parliament, had relied upon truth itself, and upon that God whose truth you profess to declare, our relative position, and our relative numbers, and the whole social and moral position of Ireland would have been the very reverse of what we now witness." As the result of that Conference a society was formed, entitled, "The British Anti-State-Church Association," and a scheme of organisation was ordered to be drawn up with a view to collecting and diffusing by lectures, tracts, &c., information calculated to throw light upon the nature and tendency of State Churches. Well might Mr. Miall, in his comments upon the assembly, under the apt heading, "The season of blossoming," declare it to be "a fact out of which something real and tangible must hereafter grow," adding, "No sneering can hide its substantial importance. It constitutes a memorable phenomenon of the present times. It is ominous in its aspect upon Church Establishments." On the formation of the society, Dr. Cox, Mr. Miall, and Mr. J. M. Hare were, as a temporary arrangement, appointed honorary secretaries. Mr. Hare—who was connected with the *Patriot*—we are glad to say still survives.

In the interval which elapsed before the assembly of the First Triennial Conference, in 1847, lectures were delivered in various towns, and 158,000 tracts on the subject were circulated. At that gathering, which took place at Crosby Hall, Bishopsgate-street, May 4-6, the suggestion was thrown out that the Government had changed its policy—that, instead of bills of pains and penalties, Nonconformists were to be coaxed by bribes, of the nature of the grant to Maynooth College, and of the allowances proposed by the Ministers of the Committee of Council on Education, in respect of religious instruction in Dissenting schools. In discussing *seriatim* the clauses in the proposed Scheme of Organisation, it was resolved

that the name of the society should be "The British Anti-State-Church Association for the Liberation of all Religion from the State." The proceedings of the Conference were closed with a public meeting at Finsbury Chapel, which was crowded with a sympathising audience.

At the Second Triennial Conference, in 1850, the Committee were able to report that the Government had abandoned their intention of proposing a measure for the endowment of the Roman Catholic clergy; that two discussions had been originated in the House of Commons on the *Regium Donum*; and that a protest had been made against the provision by which the Colonial Legislatures in South Australia were debarred from discontinuing grants for ecclesiastical purposes without the consent of the Home Government. Mr. Horsman's inquiries had "exhibited the dignitaries of the Establishment as the unscrupulous conservators of the corruptions which impair its efficiency as a religious institution," and had convicted them of "appropriating for their own aggrandisement funds which should have been apportioned among the ill-paid, hard-worked, and unhonoured members of the clerical body." After the decision in the Gorham case the Church of England could "no longer boast of that uniformity of belief, the necessity of which has been one of the arguments advanced on its behalf." Resolutions condemnatory of the Irish Church Establishment, of the *Regium Donum*, and of a clause in the Metropolitan Interments Bill, then before Parliament, "burdening the people and their posterity for ever with a sinecure provision for a large portion of the clergy of the Establishment," were adopted. It was announced at this Conference that Mr. Carvell Williams had, in 1848, been appointed to the office of secretary.

The Third Triennial Conference was, owing to circumstances, postponed until November, 1853, when the Executive Council had the opportunity of congratulating the delegates on the return of forty Protestant Dissenters as members of the House of Commons; on the extinction of the English *Regium Donum*; on the adoption of a Bill authorising the secularisation of the Canadian Clergy Reserves; on the cessation of grants to religious institutions in one of the Australian colonies; and on the most important decision of the House of Lords declaring that a Church-rate made by a minority was invalid. The Metropolitan Interments Bill, to which objection had been taken, although passed, had proved to be unworkable, and a measure of an improved character had been substituted. Some obnoxious features in a Government measure empowering Boards of Health beyond the metropolis to provide new cemeteries had been modified; and two Bills embodying vicious principles on the subject of the Edinburgh Annuity-tax and Ministers' Money in Ireland had been withdrawn. The name of the society was on this occasion changed, at the suggestion of Mr. Edward Baines, to that which it now bears; and after a paper read by Mr. E. Miall, M.P., it was resolved, on the motion of Mr. Samuel Morley, to recommend the Executive Council to appoint two small committees—one for the supervision of Parliamentary business, and the other for influencing elections. For the vigorous carrying out of the work it was proposed that an annual income of £5,000 should be guaranteed for the three succeeding years.

Although this financial result was only partially achieved, at the Fourth Triennial Conference, held in May, 1856, further successes furnished occasion for much congratulation. In the University of Oxford, Dissenters had been admitted as graduates, and a Bill for placing Cambridge on the same footing was before the Legislature; but exception was taken to certain provisions by which some of the advantages annexed to University degrees were retained as a monopoly of members of the Church of England. The secularisation of Clergy Reserves in Canada had become an accomplished fact, and in Victoria and New South Wales there was a growing feeling in opposition to grants of public money for religious purposes. A Bill for the abolition of Church-rates had been read a second time by 223 to 180, but the support of the Cabinet to the measure was conditional on the acceptance of an amendment which required a Dissenter, in order to entitle himself to relief, to declare that he was "not a member of the Established Church." This amendment the majority of the Conference decided to treat not only as "unsatisfactory," but as "one which should be rejected." Mr. Miall's proposed motion, that the House of Commons should consider in committee the temporalities of the Irish Church, and other provision made by law for religious teaching and worship in Ireland, received cordial approval.

"Continuous success" was the keynote of the report read at the Fifth Triennial Conference, in May, 1859. Ministers' Money had been abolished in Ireland; Jews had been admitted to Parliament; secular courts had been established to take cognisance of the testamentary and matrimonial business hitherto within the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts; important modifications had been obtained in the Burial Laws; and a Bill, unamended, for the abolition of Church-rates, had passed the House of Commons and had been placed on the table of the House of Lords. Efforts were being prosecuted for abolishing tests at the Universities, and for securing unsectarian education in some of the endowed Grammar Schools. From the colonies there were encouraging reports of the cessation of State grants in South Australia, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the West Indian Islands; in Victoria, a supplementary grant of £14,000 had been withdrawn; and to British Columbia and Queensland—bishops had been appointed, whose entire dependence was to be on the voluntary contributions of Episcopalians.

State-Churchmen had, by this time, become seriously alarmed as to the outcome of this movement, and Church defence societies began to spring up throughout the country. The good cause, however, made visible progress.



The Sixth Triennial Conference, in 1862, received the official report that 157 members of the House of Commons had affirmed the principle that the parish churchyards should be open for the performance of funeral rites by Nonconformist ministers, and that the insidious proposal for a census of religious professions had been defeated. Thanks were voted to Mr. Hadfield, M.P., for his efforts to abolish the declaration as to religious opinions imposed on municipal and other functionaries; and the steadfast adherence to principle on the part of the 2,000 ministers ejected in 1862—the Bi-centenary of whose expulsion was that year commemorated—received suitable recognition.

The place of assembly for the Seventh Triennial Conference was Freemasons' Hall, and on the 2nd and 3rd of May, 1865, the Hall was crowded with delegates, 700 in number. "Such an attendance," it is recorded, "has not been known since the formation of the society, twenty-one years ago, and the enthusiasm and unanimity which marked the proceedings of the present Conference were never surpassed." Mr. Edward Miall presided at the first sitting, and in his inaugural address paid graceful tributes to the memories of some of those who in the first stage of the movement had been his colleagues, but had since passed away from earth. They were thus briefly characterised by that gentleman in his opening address: "John Burnet, whose kindly and playful humour, robust intellect, unswerving allegiance to truth, unpremeditated eloquence and broad catholicity, made his memory fragrant to the Free Churches of the United Kingdom; Dr. Andrew Marshall, of Kirkintilloch, whose name is inseparably associated with the origin of the Voluntary movement in Scotland; the large-hearted, sober-minded, able, and pious Dr. Young, of Perth; John Dunlop, of Brochloch, whom Edinburgh remembers with affectionate regard; the genial, cultivated, much-loving, and much-loved Dr. Cox, of Hackney; Dr. Adam Thomson, who was with us in the full vigour of his masculine intellect; Dr. Ritchie, whose sturdy common-sense was twined with sportive pleasantry; Dr. Hutton, who, gentle as a child, stood by his convictions with the firmness of a rock; Joseph Sturge, the most unselfish and the truest philanthropist of his time; Sharrman Crawford, the upright and courageous politician; John Childs, honest, faithful, and energetic in all he undertook; Robert Norris, of Bristol, calm and genial in spirit, and bold as a lion in his loyal service to truth." The proceedings at this Conference bore witness to the intensity of the hostility, not unmingled with fear, which animated the State clergy at this juncture. Mr. Rumney, of Manchester, told of its effect there upon the City Mission, from which the clergy had withdrawn the light of their countenance, and were occupied with discussions as to "whether they should recognise Dissenters as Christians, and associate with them!" The Rev. Charles Vince counselled patience in the work to which Liberatorists had set their hands. He said: "I am afraid that the great rapidity with which material works are executed is giving us a bad schooling. I have no doubt that if they had to build another St. Paul's Cathedral in London now, people would be horrified at it taking forty-six years, and I daresay there would be this kind of contract: that within two or three years and so many days of the laying of the corner-stone the building should be ready for consecration, or the contractor should be fined so much per day. I admire the spirit which built those old cathedrals, where a man would give help to build a temple, though he knew that neither he nor his children would ever worship in it, and that not till his children's children were sleeping in their graves would the work be fully accomplished. Now, we are building a Temple of Religious Freedom. Let us try to cherish this spirit of patience, and though we may never dwell in the temple, our children, or our children's children will, and then they will bless our memories." The venerable John Howard Hinton, who was also present, delivered an affecting valedictory address. "I am seventy-four years old," he said, "and I may say that for at least half a century I have held the principles and worked for the object of this society. And so did my father before me, and so I hope will my sons after me. For myself, if I were a young man, there is no cause to which more sincerely before God, more religiously in His sight, I would devote myself than this. As an old man, who must soon retire from the scene of labour, I cannot help expressing my gratification at seeing the faces of so many young men before me; and I say to them religiously, solemnly, in tones that I would fain should embody all I feel, or have ever felt, of the purest and sincerest religion, Let this cause of Religious Freedom be next to the cause of the Gospel itself. Take it from the hands of old men who are obliged to drop it; let it in the next generation want no support, and bequeath it unimpaired to your children and your children's children." No wonder that, under the influence of such exhortations, this representative assembly determined to prosecute the work with an energy proportionate to the increased resistance they encountered, and a resolution to raise a special fund of £25,000 for the extension of the society's operations was unanimously adopted.

The faith and courage thus manifested found their reward at the ensuing general election; the results of which enabled the Executive Council, on the report read at the Eighth Triennial Conference, held in May, 1868, to rejoice over "an unbroken series of successes in Parliament." The Qualification of Offices Bill, which the year before Lord Derby had described as "a significant blow aimed at the pre-eminence of the Establishment," was passed by the House of Lords in 1866; and this was followed, in the ensuing year, by the Dublin Professorship Bill, which opened certain professorships in the University of Dublin to all persons irrespective of their religious creed; the Bill abolishing the Declaration against Transubstantiation and other doctrines and observances of the Church of Rome, formerly required as a qualification for certain offices; the

Oaths and Offices Bill, which, while making all the Queen's subjects, without regard to creed, eligible to hold the office of Lord Chancellor of Ireland, substituted an unobjectionable oath for offensive oaths previously required from office-holders, and repealed the penalty attaching to mayors and other public officers attending Nonconformist places of worship with the insignia of their office. The Bill for abolishing compulsory Church-rates had passed through the House of Commons, and had been read a second time in the House of Lords; the Lower House had passed a Bill recognising the national character of the national seats of learning; and a Parliamentary assault upon the Irish Establishment had received the support of 250 members—Mr. Gladstone emphatically declaring that in the settlement of the question, the Irish "Church, as a State Church, must cease to exist." Mr. E. Baines, M.P., in supporting the adoption of the report, rejoiced that on the subject of education the rights of conscience were then generally acknowledged, so far as the Legislature had occasion to touch it. A Bill then before Parliament rendered necessary a conscience clause for elementary schools receiving public money, and dissociated religion from the work of secular education. As to middle-class education, a Parliamentary report recommended that endowed schools should be thrown open to all, the pupils being protected by a conscience clause, and that the head-master should no longer necessarily be a clergyman of the Church of England. It was not without reason that the Rev. J. P. Mursell, who presided over the 800 delegates assembled at the Cannon-street Hotel, stated that the society which led the van in the advocacy of religious liberty seemed now to have "passed through its childhood and valiant youth, and to be putting on the proportions of full manhood."

*Crescit eundo.* At the next "periodical stock-taking"—the Ninth Triennial Conference, in May, 1871—the cause of Religious Equality had a triumph to record, the importance of which it was hardly possible to overrate, viz., the contemporaneous disestablishment of Episcopalianism in Ireland and the withdrawal of public support from the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian bodies. "On the 26th of July, 1869," said the report of the Executive Committee, "the Irish Church Act received the Royal assent; and in accordance with its provisions, on the 31st of December, 1870, Church and State in Ireland were separated. The Ecclesiastical Corporations created by law were dissolved, the Ecclesiastical Courts were abolished, all national authority and privileges were withdrawn from Irish Episcopalianism, and, subject to the compensation of vested interests, the national property in the hands of the Church was resumed by the State for the benefit of the entire nation." In the same year the Jamaica Clergy Act was allowed to expire, the Church of England thus ceasing to be "Established" in that colony; and the Legislative Council of the Bahamas passed an Act relieving, at the expiration of seven years, the revenues of the colony from all charges for clerical salaries, or for the erection and repair of churches. The opponents of State-aid to religion in the important colony of Victoria had, one year later, the satisfaction of seeing their efforts crowned with success. On the subject of Ecclesiastical Tests at the Universities, a Bill making their abolition compulsory, instead of being permissive, had passed through the House of Commons, and the Endowed Schools Bill of 1869 made large concessions in the direction of religious freedom. Less than a week after this Conference had been brought to a close, Mr. Miall brought forward in the House of Commons a resolution opening up the whole question of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the English State Church. The debate elicited from Mr. Disraeli the admission—for which he quoted archiepiscopal authority—that the nation had outgrown the Church, and that "reconstruction"—the difficulty of which he admitted to be very great—was essential to the perpetuation of the Establishment. Still more important was the significant remark (may we say suggestion?) with which Mr. Gladstone, as Prime Minister, closed his speech in reply to Mr. Miall's motion:—"I shall venture to say to my honourable friend, what I am sure he will not resent, that, if he seeks to convert the majority of the House of Commons to his opinions, he must begin by undertaking the preliminary work of converting to those opinions the majority of the people of England."

How was this challenge met? Let the record of the proceedings at the Tenth Triennial Conference, held in May, 1874, supply the answer. The Gladstone Administration having turned a deaf ear to the remonstrances of the Nonconformists against the injustice involved in the 25th clause of the Education Act, and having made an ineffectual attempt to conciliate the Roman Catholics in connection with the Irish Universities Act by some objectionable concessions which failed, however, to satisfy the requirements of the priests, an appeal was that made to the country in 1874. The result was a Liberal majority of sixty-eight was converted into a Conservative majority of fifty; and the elevation of Mr. Disraeli to the position of Prime Minister. It was immediately after these occurrences, in which the organs of the State-Church discerned the utter rout of "English Political Dissent," that the aforesaid Conference took place. The delegates exceeded by some hundreds those who had met at any previous Conference—the number reaching 1,100—and the tone of the meeting was one of unmistakable determination and earnest persistence. Plans were agreed upon for improving the organisation of the society, for sending additional lecturers throughout the country, and for diffusing more widely information upon the question of Church Establishment by means of printed publications. To give effect to these plans it was resolved to raise a special fund of £100,000, and before the close of the Conference nearly a quarter of that amount had been subscribed.

With a reactionary Government, supported by a mechanical majority, Parliamentary action in the inte-

rest of Religious Freedom was for the most part suspended, and the Executive Committee had little to communicate to the Eleventh Triennial Conference, held in May, 1877, but the records of diligent seed-sowing. During the three preceding years, 2,600 meetings and lectures had been held, including those in which the Revs. R. W. Dale and J. G. Rogers rendered such important service; between five and six millions of publications had been issued; and £42,000 had been subscribed. Faith in the ultimate triumph of their principles—and that possibly at no remote date—suggested the preparation of a plan on the lines of which the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church of England might be practically and equitably realised. This scheme, which was the work of a large and representative committee, who devoted enormous time and labour to its consideration, has been published as a separate paper. "Before long, we doubt not, these 'Suggestions' will arouse more public interest than they have yet evoked. They deal with the whole subject—some of the topics discussed being:—"To whom Compensation is to be given," "Mode of Compensation," "Disposal of Buildings," and "Disposal of Surplus Property." At this Conference it was announced that Mr. Carvell Williams would, at the close of the twenty-fifth year of his secretaryship in October, resign that office. It was, however, stated that he would continue to be officially connected with the society, and subsequently he was appointed chairman of the society's Parliamentary Committee, and deputy-chairman of the Executive Committee; which offices he still holds.

In this spirit of steadfast attachment to principle, the supporters of Religious Equality in England have still held on their course "through evil report and through good report." At the General Election in 1880, the clouds which had so long darkened their prospects of successful Parliamentary action were dispersed, and State Church organs recognise as a natural consequence of the exertions which, at the last election, restored Mr. Gladstone to the Premiership, that one of the first measures introduced into Parliament should be a Bill for abolishing clerical exclusiveness in the national graveyards. The House of Lords, by passing the Bill through its most crucial stage, has already endorsed to this extent the principle of Religious Freedom; and the House of Commons contains among its members an unprecedentedly large proportion of Nonconformists, and of other Liberals hostile to the mischievous union between Church and State. It is under such auspicious circumstances that the Liberation Society has been holding its Twelfth Triennial Conference.

#### NOTES ON THE CONFERENCE.

[BY AN EYE WITNESS.]

THE attendance of delegates at the Twelfth Triennial Conference of the Liberation Society was one of the largest known in the history of the movement, and the spirit of earnest enthusiasm which has characterised the proceedings was all that its most ardent friend could desire. The place of assembly was the City Terminus Hotel, and before the hour fixed for opening the Conference—eleven o'clock on Thursday—the Grand Hall was crowded. The Chairman, Mr. Henry Lee, M.P., entered, accompanied by more than a dozen other Members of Parliament—a larger array than were ever present at any similar gathering—and their arrival was greeted with loud applause. But the warmest welcome was that which was accorded to Mr. Edward Miall, who, though unable to address or even to attend public meetings for some years past, had resolved to make a special effort to be present on this occasion. Mr. Lee, in some well-chosen words, alluded to the old and valued friend of Religious Equality, who had steadily maintained the cause at a time when such advocacy incurred the penalty of mean abuse, which was lamentable as proceeding from the mouths of civilised men. In reviewing past successes Mr. Lee expressed satisfaction that the Irish Church Act passed by Mr. Gladstone (the first mention of whose name in the Conference elicited a burst of cheering) had been the means of opening the eyes of many persons to the advantages of severing the connection between Church and State, because on every side, from Churchmen as well as Nonconformists, testimony was borne to the fact that the results of that Act were beneficent. In the present Session the unerring instinct of the House of Lords has proved itself superior to the spiritual illumination of some of the Bishops, by recognising that the time has come for the cessation of resistance to the demand for religious freedom in the national graveyards. No one need be alarmed by the Bishop of Lincoln's prophecies as to the evils which would follow, for said Mr. Lee with shrewd humour, "experience teaches that the prophecies of bishops are never fulfilled." Still urging continuous, unflinching, uncompromising effort, Mr. Lee congratulated the friends of the society on the fact that the signs of the times pointed to an early cessation of the Establishment, not only in Scotland, but in England. The usual business details were then proceeded with, a rider being adopted, on the motion of Mr. Chick, instructing the committee, in selecting names for the Executive Committee, to give special attention to the desirability of co-operative action with the various Liberal associations throughout the country. The report of the Executive Committee noted the fact that during the past six years the expenditure of the society amounted to nearly £81,000; since the last Triennial Conference about seven millions of publications had been issued, and the meetings and lectures had numbered about 2,000. Owing to the composition of the Parliament, so far as Parliamentary results were concerned, the interval had been one of absolute barrenness, but the change wrought at the late General Election had secured the success of the principle involved in Mr. Osborne Morgan's Burial Bill and resolution, "every Liberal candidate, without exception,"



having pledged himself to support the immediate removal of the existing disability.

The report, of course, did not note an incident which is not altogether without historical interest. For the first time, I believe, since the passing of the Act of Uniformity, the Address to Her Majesty in reply to the Speech from the Throne was seconded by a Nonconformist, Mr. Hugh Mason, M.P. for Ashton-under-Lyne. That selection involves a subsequent presentation to the Sovereign. The adoption of the report was moved by that tried friend of the cause, the senior Liberal Member for Merthyr, who apologised for some hoarseness under which he suffered, caused by shouting to those who swarmed into the Crystal Palace at the Welsh Liberal demonstration on the previous day, and where his countrymen indulged their "insatiable appetite for speaking and hearing speeches." Out of thirty representatives sent by the Principality to the House of Commons, there were twenty-eight Liberals, of whom he questioned if there was one who would vote against a measure of Disestablishment, while many were pledged to vote in its support. Mr. Richard, from personal recollection—for he was present at the birth of the society in 1844—called over a muster-roll of some of its earliest friends. These, he said, had passed away, but "the greatest of them all, the central figure to whose faith, and courage, and high principle the existence of the society is owing, and who for many years led, and guided, and stimulated it," still remained, and was among them that day. At this allusion the whole assembly rose, and greeted Mr. Edward Miall with enthusiastic cheers. While rehearsing the triumphs which had been already achieved, and alluding to the determination under adverse circumstances manifested by the Liberationists at the date of the last Conference, Mr. Richard provoked a laugh by the enthusiastic manner in which he described the delegates on that occasion: "They were resolute, full of fight"—"that is," said the President of the Peace Society, "in a moral sense." The altered tone and tendency of the public mind was touched upon. Recent events had excited a widespread suspicion that State connection had produced a deteriorating and disastrous influence on the character and ministrations of the English clergy. The *Guardian*, it was true, rebuked the policy of aggression and bloodshed in a manner worthy of a Christian paper; but with some noble exceptions, the official guardians of national religion and morality stood dumb in the presence of the iniquities which were being enacted. Yet when an attempt was made to invade one of their ecclesiastical privileges—a change demanded by the common-sense of the nation—Convocation, which had never uttered a protest during years of aggressive and unrighteous war against the sacrifice of tens of thousands of lives, and the havoc and desolation which had been wrought without a pretext or cause, fulminated anathemas, declaring it to be "a dishonour to Almighty God" to destroy the clerical monopoly of the graveyards. No man had recognised this fact more clearly than Mr. Gladstone, and they might be assured that a mind so penetrating would be led to inquire the cause. Rev. F. Trestrail, who was also present at the first meeting of the society in 1844, and is now Chairman of the Baptist Union, seconded the resolution, and in solemn tones, committed to younger men the task of completing the work of Religious Equality, of which some who must soon retire from the scene could hardly expect to see the full accomplishment. The resolution was supported by Mr. Hugh Mason, M.P., who counselled patience and loyal confidence in the Government; by Mr. Jesse Collings, M.P., who said the advanced Liberals would not press, out of its turn, any particular reform, so long as the work of reform was proceeded with; and by Mr. Illingworth, M.P., who testified to the perfect unity which pervaded all sections of Liberals. It "anticipates with confidence the passing of further measures for the promotion of Religious Equality, as well as a renewal of vigorous agitation for the complete accomplishment of the society's work," and was carried unanimously. The next resolution, which expressed congratulation at the fact that the recent election had returned "a larger number of members in favour of the principle of Disestablishment," than had sat in any previous Parliament, was very suitably assigned to Mr. F. Schnadhorst, who had rendered most important aid in the organisation—the Federation of Liberal Associations—to which that success is largely attributable. That process, stigmatised by opponents who had well-founded reasons for dissatisfaction with it as "the Caucus," was explained by Mr. Schnadhorst to be a development of the principle that the Liberal party shall govern itself. For the first time in the history of elections, the Radical and Nonconformist sections had been allowed to exercise a fair share of influence in the selection of the candidates. In Birmingham it had been determined, in preparation for a reform of the county franchise, to institute a political propaganda, to extend to all the villages in the adjoining counties, the Saturday afternoons being employed in preaching Liberal principles. The resolution was seconded by Rev. S. Pearson, and supported by the Hon. Lyulph Stanley, M.P. Mr. C. H. James, M.P., the colleague of Mr. Richard in the representation of Merthyr, and who evidently realises in his own case the characteristics which he assigned to a kindred nationality—"hard-headed, knowing what they want, and going straight to it"—in a short, but telling, speech, pleaded for early attention to a Liberation work in Wales. As they were going to deal with Scotland at an early date, he pleaded, "Tack us on to Scotland." The revised constitution having been adopted, the Conference adjourned.

A cold collation was served at three o'clock, and was attended by some hundreds. Under the presidency of Mr. H. R. Ellington, the usual loyal toasts were honoured, and some pithy addresses given by the Rev. Thos. Green, Dr. Hutton, Mr. E. S. Robinson, Rev. L.

Carpenter and Rev. W. Griffith. Rev. J. T. Brown, of Northampton, claimed for the village of Brington, the birthplace of Washington, the credit of having produced the first germ of this organisation; the Rev. J. P. Mursell having come to the chapel there, called several ministers together to consider the subject. The meeting, it was stated, took place in the Town Hall at Leicester. Dr. Cox, who attended in hopes of suppressing the movement, became, as the result of what he heard there, its hearty advocate.

The evening meeting, over which Mr. James Stuart, of Glasgow, presided—Mr. Dick Peddie, M.P., being detained by Parliamentary duties—was occupied for some time with the question of Scotch Disestablishment. An early settlement of the question was urged by several speakers—Dr. Hutton and others distinctly denying that there was any engagement binding on Scottish Liberals generally which necessitated delay. If any unfortunate gentlemen had so committed themselves, that was a matter for them to settle with their constituents; but the country was ripe for a settlement of the question without further delay. A resolution disapproving the idea of leaving the question "in abeyance until the occurrence of another election," and urging that it should be brought to "a decisive issue at the earliest practicable period," was adopted. Mr. Carvell Williams set forth the provisions of the Government Burials Bill, and the resolutions which had been adopted in criticism of the clauses. With regard to the proposal for the perpetuation of existing fees, when the services were not required, he contended that these fees should be only paid to existing incumbents, clerks, and sextons. As to consecration, they did not object to Episcopalians consecrating everything in earth, air, or sky; all that they claimed was that the law should know nothing of it "as a disqualifying and legal act." They strongly objected to the introduction into the Bill of words which might in any way tend to encourage the claim of Convocation to quasi-legislative powers. If the Bill did not take a satisfactory shape, it could not be accepted as a settlement, and they could not be debarred by any reproach of breach of faith from seeking afterwards its amendment. It was suggested by one staunch delegate that, to make the position of Liberationists quite secure, it might be desirable to express in the resolution a desire "that the executive will strongly urge upon their friends in the House of Commons that the Bill, as it at present stands, cannot be accepted as a settlement of the question," but it was considered by a large majority that this was sufficiently manifest from the terms of the original resolution, certain provisions being set forth as "defective" and "objectionable," and a hope expressed that the Bill "may be so amended as to become a completely satisfactory and effective measure." The original resolution was ultimately adopted.

The Conference resumed on Friday morning in the "Pillar Hall," which was thronged. The Hon. E. Lyulph Stanley, M.P., who presided, in his introductory address, drew attention to several matters connected with the work of education. Of the training colleges for teachers—the yearly expenses of which were almost entirely defrayed by Parliamentary grants—about four-fifths were exclusively Church of England, and carried on upon denominational lines without any conscience clause. The result was that the most intelligent and industrious of the pupil teachers were often passed over, while inferior persons were admitted. He had in his mind a recent case of a young girl who passed well up in the first division, but failed, he supposed, to reach the standard entitling her to admission at Stockwell. On making application at Whitelands she was told that she must undergo the ceremony of "confirmation," but as her conscience did not approve that step she declined, and was excluded, while inferior girls were admitted. That, he suggested—and the Conference approved the hint—was a question which ought to be raised in Parliament with a view to the reformation of the system. A comprehensive measure to extend elementary education might be expected from Mr. Mundella, and Liberationists might fairly expect that the reactionary steps which had been taken as to the grammar schools would be revoked. He was glad to believe that in no place at the present time were a man's religious opinions freer than in the old Universities. Still there was something remaining to be accomplished in the removal of restrictions as to headships and fellowships. In the course of the discussion which followed upon the subject, Professor Bryce, M.P., who was heartily welcomed, explained that the motion of which Mr. Roundell had given notice only sought to carry out the principles already conceded by the Act of 1871. It was claimed at that time that proper provision should be made for religious instruction and worship in the colleges, but "religion" was not necessarily that of the Church of England, nor was it essential that that "instruction" should be given by the clergy of that Church. In the great majority of the colleges at the present time attendance at the chapels, where the service was conducted according to the rites of the Church of England, was not compulsory; and laymen had sufficiently proved themselves to be as successful as the clergy in imparting religious instruction. Colleges were lay foundations, legally, morally, and practically, and the national Universities ought to have no connection with any religious institution. It was thought necessary to make exception in the case of professorships of divinity, owing to the difficulty of teaching that subject except upon certain specified lines, but the same argument does not hold good as to the chairs of Hebrew and Ecclesiastical History, which needed such restrictions no more than those of Greek and Moral Philosophy. All those chairs should be open to laymen and Nonconformist ministers. At present the chairs of Hebrew and Ecclesiastical History were endowed by canonries, and the change might involve the provision of the necessary funds from some other source. Up to the present time there had come to the Universities a smaller number of Nonconformists than the resident professors expected and desired, and it was believed that if the change of which he (Mr. Bryce) had

given notice, was carried out, it would assist in removing the lingering fears of Nonconformist parents as to any undue bias to which their sons might be exposed at the Universities. Mr. Frederic Harrison, who followed Professor Bryce, said he had recently revisited Oxford, and he found that there was still working there a steady, pushing weight of strictly clerical and Church of England influence. He was by no means satisfied with the working of the Commission, which, if he was rightly informed, had in one case manifested considerable indisposition to part with an indirect clerical restriction, although the college was unanimous in the wish for the change, while in another case the Commission had prepared a scheme for imposing a new clerical restriction. Great care must be taken that the advantages which had been gained were not stolen back, and he recommended the appointment of a small standing committee to keep watch over the matter. Mr. Ilbert, who read a petition extensively signed by Liberals of Oxford University, including heads of colleges, in favour of further changes, said the restrictions to which exception was taken by Mr. Roundell and Mr. Bryce were not warranted by the denominational provisions of the Act, and were inconsistent with its undenominational principles. On the motion of Mr. W. S. Aldis, seconded by Mr. H. Spicer, a resolution in favour of the removal of these clerical restrictions was adopted. The assembly had exhibited some signs of weariness during the discussion of this subject, but these disappeared when the Rev. J. G. Rogers stood forward to propose a resolution on the subject of the Public Worship Regulation Act. He was welcomed at the outset with enthusiastic applause, which was repeatedly renewed during the progress of his remarks. He struck the right key-note when he expressed his gratification in noting how rapidly this movement was ceasing to be merely Nonconformist, and assuming a national character. Beyond the Burial question it would be difficult to specify a purely Nonconformist grievance, and he rejoiced that Nonconformists would thus be left free to concentrate their thoughts on the national bearings of the question. As Liberationists, they knew no reason why Romanism even should constitute a bar to public employment, or why attendants at the Derby and others should undertake to decide in what way the religion of Christ could be best protected, and should attempt to reimpose for Members of Parliament religious tests which they ventured to think had been swept away. As a Protestant, he had, however, a right to protest against the Romanising tendencies of the Church of England, and, with his friend, Mr. Dale, he intended ere long to give utterance to such a protest in different parts of the country—an intimation which was received with loud cheering. Mr. Rogers, in concluding his address, expressed his confidence in the Gladstone Administration. One advice, however, he should like to give them, "Be sure and don't take up the troubled question of Church Reform." The result of such an attempt would be that the Church would still continue unreformed, but the Liberal party would be shattered. Mr. Rogers proposed a resolution declaring the Public Worship Regulation Act a failure, and suggesting Disestablishment as the remedy for the scandals occasioned by the attempts to regulate religion by the coercive machinery of the secular tribunals. The resolution was seconded by a clergyman of the Church of England, the Rev. C. H. Collings, of Wirksworth, who said he owed a debt of deepest gratitude to the great Nonconformist teachers of this country for having brushed aside the prejudices of his early education. He believed no happier day could dawn than that on which the Queen's sign-manual would be placed to an Act of Parliament for the severance of Church and State, and was ready, if he could lend a hand in promoting that object, to travel for the purpose north, south, east, or west. The Rev. Charles Stovel, who was received with loud applause, came forward to support the resolution. He mentioned that he was in his eighty-second year, and had been for sixty years engaged in the Nonconformist ministry. The opposition which had to be encountered in its earliest stage by the promoters of this movement might be judged from the fact that, after attending the first Conference, he was informed by his deacons that they were "never ashamed of their pastor before." A remark of Earl Grey had, in his view, much influence in the establishment of this society. A deputation having been sent to Downing-street, with a list of Dissenting grievances, Earl Grey, taking the list in his hand, said, "If I were authorised to remedy all these grievances, which I am not, allow me to ask, would you be satisfied?" There were some who replied in the affirmative, but he (Mr. Stovel) and John Burnet said, "No, my lord." His lordship, after remarking that for himself he was of opinion that there ought to be a State religion, added, "If you think, and all your works lead me to think you do, that we should have no Establishment by law, why don't you say so? Do you not know that your opponents understand your principles as well as you do, and everything that you ask they treat as but an instalment of the full demand." The message was carried back to Blomfield-street, and was there laughed at, but the wisdom of the course thus suggested ultimately received approval. A resolution on the subject of Church patronage, and the usual votes of thanks brought the proceedings of the Conference to a close.

At the public meeting in the evening the Metropolitan Tabernacle was densely packed to its full capacity. Mr. Spurgeon was, to his great regret, unable to be present, owing to illness, which confined him to his room. For the masterly speech of the Rev. Dr. Allon, and the effective addresses of the Rev. A. Oliver, Mr. Carvell Williams, Mr. Jesse Collings, M.P., and the other speakers, I must refer your readers to the detailed reports, which should be widely diffused throughout the country with a view to hastening forward the work still remaining to be accomplished before the advent of the full era of Religious Equality.



## THE TWELFTH TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE LIBERATION SOCIETY.

THE sittings in this Conference commenced at the Cannon-street Hotel, on Thursday, at eleven o'clock. The number of delegates appointed was about 800, nearly the whole of whom were present at the opening session, and filled the large hall. In addition to Mr. H. Lee, M.P., who presided, there were present:—Messrs. G. Armitstead, M.P., J. Collings, M.P., J. J. Colman, M.P., E. T. Gourley, M.P., F. Henderson, M.P., J. D. Hutchinson, M.P., A. Illingworth, M.P., C. H. James, M.P., H. Mason, M.P., R. T. Middleton, M.P., G. Palmer, M.P., A. Pease, M.P., H. Richard, M.P., J. P. Thomasson, M.P., Hon. E. L. Stanley, M.P., Dr. Webster, M.P.

The following ministers were among the delegates present:—Rev. D. Amos, J. W. Atkinson, W. J. Avery, T. Bagley, C. N. Barham, J. Belcher, T. Blandford, T. W. Bourne, C. Bright, W. Brock, J. R. Brown, J. T. Brown, J. Browne, F. W. C. Bruce, J. M. Camp, E. L. Carpenter, S. Chinn, J. P. Chown, S. Clarkson, W. Clarkson, J. Clifford, F. Cocker, C. H. Collins, P. Cope, J. Croft, W. Cliff, D. Davies, R. Davies, W. H. Davidson, H. Dawson, J. P. Dunn, J. M. Erskine, R. C. Etheridge, J. Evans, J. M. Evans, J. Foreman, W. Freeman, J. C. Gallaway, J. J. Goadby, A. Graham, S. Green, T. Green, W. Griffith, A. Hannay, S. Hebditch, E. Henderson, E. Hill, F. M. Holmes, J. H. Hollowell, J. P. Hopps, W. G. Horder, E. V. Horton, T. Hunter, Dr. Hutton, H. Ierson, G. S. Ingram, J. O. Jackson, Jenkin Jones, John Jones, W. Jones, W. Jubb, A. King, J. T. King, J. T. King, J. Legge, T. Lewis, T. Lloyd, E. Macbeth, A. Macdonald, J. Marchant, W. Marshall, A. Means, T. Michael, J. H. Millard, J. Morgan, G. M. Murphy, J. B. Myers, T. Neave, Dr. Newth, J. Oldham, A. Oliver, T. Pavitt, W. H. Payne, S. Pearson, W. Pickett, E. C. Pike, J. Rees, W. Rees, E. H. Roberts, J. G. Rogers, W. K. Rowe, J. S. Russell, E. Schnadhorst, W. W. Sherrin, G. Short, J. Sinclair, E. Stevenson, H. Stewart, Dr. J. Stock, C. Stovel, J. Thomas, A. Tilly, H. S. Toms, F. Treadwell, J. Tuckwell, P. J. Turquand, T. C. Udall, F. Wagstaff, E. Wallace, E. White, J. J. Whittles, C. Williams, S. Withington.

Among the residents in London and the suburbs there were present:—Messrs. Edward Miall, Henry Wright, J. P., John Clapham, J. P., J. E. Abbs, J. P., H. R. Ellington, T. Chatfield Clarke, Henry Spicer, James Clarke, Peter Bayne, L. D. J. Heywood, F. R. S. F. Wood, L. D. A. C. Shephard, Howard Evans, F. Crellin, C. H. Elt, G. B. Howat, A. Dunn, C. S. Miall, J. Benham, H. S. Leonard, H. Baines, G. P. Macdonnell, W. D. Hertz, A. Ransom, A. Clayton, W. Ransom, John Templeton, T. Davies, C. Hull, J. Compton, H. B. Muir, R. Hellier, J. Meredith, W. B. Barbour, Percy Clarke, C. Chambers, J. Tapley, J. Pickett, W. R. Rickett, G. Rowlands, M. Theobald, W. S. Gard, H. Appleton, J. Stuchbery, O. T. Islop, G. H. Kemp, E. Forsyth, E. Reed, W. Jones, R. Read, J. Messent, R. Dargy, J. J. Smith, G. Smith, S. Olding, J. Watson, E. H. Tyrer, W. Harker, A. Conder, J. W. Mason, J. Withers, E. Callard, J. N. Winstar, R. Grace, W. J. Everitt, O. Lewis, H. W. Chidgey, A. H. Haggis, H. Cooper, J. Peall, J. Turner, M. B. Sutton, A. C. Collins, G. Minto, J. Waylen, A. E. Lamb, T. A. Johns, J. Shaw, Cooke Baines, J. Halliwell, J. B. Nicholson, Josiah Baines, T. B. Fretwell, R. Hampton, G. Wareham, C. J. Lyel, John Clarke, O. Montague, J. Budwell, J. Harcourt, E. Macdon, C. G. Welling, W. Hacking, A. Briggs, W. H. Butcher, H. K. Lewis, A. T. Bowser, P. Lucas, A. Wontner, J. Wates, T. P. Alder, J. B. Allbrook, J. H. Osborn, E. Meyrick, J. H. Pontifex, W. Paterson, A. Miall, J. B. Rogers, J. E. Ashley, J. Watts, H. Cooper, C. Saunders, B. Britten, R. Johnson, D. Irving, S. Cowdry, J. Pullin, P. Cowie, H. G. Woods, A. Lockhart, R. C. Page, C. Wilkes, W. Tuke.

Among the Country delegates were:—Messrs. W. Baines, J. P., Leicester; T. Edgwick, J. P., Halesley; J. Wright, Birmingham; G. Jenkins, Portsmouth; J. Pearce, Southampton; E. King Fordham, J. P., Ashwell; E. F. A. Briggs, Daventry; T. Gee, Denbigh; Councillor R. Bird, Cardiff; E. Gripper, Nottingham; T. Harris, J. P., Litchfield; P. P. Perry, Northampton; W. Thackray, jun., Sunderland; J. Cory, Cardiff; J. Brown, Paisley; J. Hasler, Andover; G. Short, Salisbury; Bateman Brown, St. Ives; T. Michael, Halifax; J. Wicks, jun., Colchester; W. Stanvon, Leicester; Councillor Kerr, Halifax; E. C. Cory, West Hartlepool; E. C. Pike, Birmingham; E. S. Robinson, Bristol; W. B. Priestley, Bradford; R. Herriot, Kirkcaldy; F. Schnadhorst, Birmingham; J. Moses, Newport; J. Nicholson, Leek; R. P. Edwards, Bath; John Trehane, Exeter; James Ashworth, Rochdale; G. B. Sully, Bridgewater; W. G. Lankester, Southampton; James Stewart, Glasgow; T. Nicholson, Forest of Dean; N. F. Scrivener, Weston Turville; A. Curtis, Neath; W. Frier, Ipswich; W. Brown, Braintree; J. Toller, Waterbeach; J. Gomersall, Leeds; R. Morris, Tulsea; N. Ashby, Isleworth; S. Cherry, Bedford; W. Roff, Bedford; J. Pearce, Southampton; A. J. Miller, Southampton; R. Hicks, Blandford; J. G. Tolley, Mansfield; C. E. Woolston, Wellingborough; R. Kerr, Halifax; C. E. Simes, Worcester; W. Shoosmith, Northampton; H. Fairley, Godmanchester; T. Purser, Northampton; F. T. Beaven, Holt; J. C. Cretmore, Wisbech; S. S. Wheeler, Leicester; J. Barrat, Woolwich; J. B. Harvey, Colchester; W. H. Lee, Wakefield; J. Hutchinson, Ashton-under-Lyne; W. Conway, Pontypool; J. Robinson, Northampton; R. Barling, Staplehurst; A. Fyson, Witham; C. W. Adeney, Christchurch; H. Burrows, Cambridge; H. Aldrich, Brighton; M. Simpson, Musselburgh; W. H. Whiteman, Croydon; G. Jones, Monmouth; J. Smith, Huddersfield; W. W. Boyne, Croydon; R. Children, Hadden; R. P. Edwards, Bath; C. Robinson, St. Ives; J. Howard, Lakenheath; J. Scott, Lakenheath; J. Reynolds, Bourton-on-Water; R. Reynolds, Bourton-on-Water; M. P. Mansfield, Northampton; T. B. Fordham, Godmanchester; W. Kitching, Portsmouth; W. Jupp, Portsmouth; J. E. Pickard, Leicester; E. F. A. Briggs, Daventry; G. Green, Wellingborough; Chas. Bull, Wellingborough; W. Newman, Grimsby; J. Ellis, Cleckheaton; J. H. Wilkinson, Thrapston; E. W. Dixon, Witham; E. H. Goulden, Sutton; E. Franks, Croydon; John Moss, Kelvedon; C. P. Kingsley, Fairfield; G. Hastings, Acocks Green; N. P. Sharnan, Wellingborough; J. J. Ellis, Cambridge; J. Cockayne, Nottingham; J. Hitchen, Kettering; T. Barrett, Colchester; F. Goldsmith, Cambridge; T. Kessell, Penzance; S. Storey, Sunderland; G. Walker, Huddersfield; James Nutter, Cambridge; G. Carruthers, Bedford; J. F. Alexander, Manchester; J. Reynolds, Widenhead; R. Taylor, Bradford; W. Clarke, Cambridge; J. Wiles, St. Albans; T. H. Mackie, Wallingford; O. Rodway, Stroud; J. B. Butler, Alton; D. Ashby, Bedford; T. Almond, Leicester; H. Whibley, Sittingbourne; J. E. Gibbard, Sittingbourne; M. Whibley, Cambridge; B. Baker, Leeds; H. E. Bottomley, Coventry; J. E. Liddiard, Hastings; J. R. Jacob, Newport; S. Boothroyd, Southport; D. Davis, Aberdare; J. L. Stowe, Cardiff; R. Enoch, Cardiff; R. Cleaver, Northampton; G. Cox, Bath; G. Bass, Northampton; S. Knowles, Bury; J. Berry, Daventry; G. Booth, Manchester; J. B. Hutchinson, Nottingham; A. Deverell, Thame; W. Chapman, Leicester; R. Sharp, Lynton; W. E. Goodman, Keighley; J. Andrew, Leeds; Councillor G. W. Cole-

brook, Reading; A. Rollason, Saffron Walden; J. Sadler, Derby; J. Parker, Finedon; W. J. Dyer, High Wycombe; John Evans, Pontypool; John Thomas, Brynmawr; E. Morgan, Coalbrookdale; J. Gould, Chard; W. Morley, Thame; J. Tait, Edinburgh; W. J. Clark, Great Shelford; W. W. Clear, Cambridge; L. Evans, Hebron; J. P. Maynards, Plymouth; C. White, Bradford; J. P. Harvey, Kidderminster; J. B. Wilkins, Acocks Green; John Rees, Pontrhydryn; J. Jall, Staplehurst; J. E. Wolstenholme, Wakefield; G. Stevenson, Leicester; T. Williams, Pontypool; E. Davies, Brockley; D. Friend, Brighton; T. G. Grundy, Bristol; W. Fagg, Folkestone; E. H. Gordon, Nottingham; R. Affleck, Manchester; J. Stewart, Hastings; R. Johnston, Aylesbury; J. T. Somes, Thrapston; D. Tomkins, Great Yarmouth; J. Dudding, Selby; H. J. Crossley, Hebden Bridge; J. Bond, Manchester; S. E. Cannon, Canterbury; J. J. Williams, Northampton; H. J. Favell, Kettering; A. J. David, Newport; T. Grear, Wellingborough; J. Calvert, Belper; T. M. Hunter, Huntingdon; J. Fell, Duxford; A. Bowden, Ashton-under-Lyne; P. James, Wellingborough; S. Sage, Pangbourne.

On the motion of Mr. Alderman GRIPPER, seconded by Mr. UNWIN, Mr. Fisher, Mr. W. Clarke, M.A., and Mr. S. Robjohns, were appointed secretaries of the Conference.

### THE CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH.

THE CHAIRMAN then said: Gentlemen of the Conference, on behalf of the Executive Committee I give you a hearty welcome, and perhaps there never was a period when that welcome could be given under more cheerful aspects than it can be given to-day. I feel highly honoured in being permitted to occupy this position at a period when we have so much to congratulate ourselves upon with reference to past labours, and I feel especially pleased to have on my left hand our old and valued friend, Edward Miall. (Loud cheers.) To-day he witnesses some of the results of the labours of thirty-six years; and although he is enfeebled, his mind cannot fail to recognise the results of those labours, and to rejoice that through evil report and through good report, amidst abuse which sometimes has reached a state of things perfectly lamentable, as proceeding from the mouths of civilised men, he is here to-day looking at the past, and I trust also looking to the future—cheerfully, and anticipating the success of that great cause which we all have at heart. (Cheers.) We may congratulate ourselves upon the present position of our cause, and on its steady growth. We are reaping the harvest which others have sown. The Church-rate conflict was one of those milestones, or those stones on the way, which remind us of the victories that we obtained for civil and religious liberty. The educational reforms that have taken place have opened up to us prospects which a few years ago we could not contemplate; and we have before us now, as we think, the possibility of a well-taught population, able to take their part with more intelligence than they have in the past, in all the great questions which concern the happiness and welfare of their fellow men. The Irish Act, passed by Mr. Gladstone—(cheers)—has been the means of opening the eyes of many persons to the inutility of establishments; and although the Bishop of Lincoln in the House of Lords the other day told us that he could not tell what good that measure had done, from Ireland on every side, both from Churchmen and Nonconformists, we have testimony that that Act was a beneficial Act, and has been of great advantage to that country. (Hear, hear.) It has been a long lane that we have had to travel, but there have been those in the past who have regarded as a possibility the end to which we are looking forward. We cannot but think of the doings of those who in past days have exercised great influence upon the people of this country. Mr. Fox said a hundred years ago: "It would, perhaps, be contended that the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts might enable Dissenters to obtain a majority. This he scarcely thought probable, but it appeared fully sufficient to answer that if the majority of the people of England should ever be for the abolition of the Established Church, in such case the abolition ought immediately to follow." (Cheers.) We thus see that so long back as this there have been men who have fought our battle long before the Liberation Society existed, and who, by their eloquence and their persistent labours, did something to permeate through society the great principles which we advocate. The late election has been spoken of as a Nonconformist victory, and yet, perhaps, there never has been a general election in which Disestablishment had so little prominence. And why is it? It is because of the labours which this society has entered into in the past. People do not require to be told what their duty is. All shades of Nonconformists, even some of our friends who have hitherto held aloof from us, are beginning to recognise that this is the great question of the day, and that upon its resolution will depend the future welfare, happiness, and prosperity of this land. Well, gentlemen, we are on the eve of another triumph, and I trust before this Session passes the Burial Bill will have become law. (Hear, hear.) According to the *Standard*, the unerring instinct of the lords has come to the conclusion that the time has arrived when all further opposition must cease; and it would appear that the unerring instinct of the lords is superior to the spiritual illumination of the bishops—(laughter)—who, however, have at length recognised the necessity of this

measure, and are prepared to do that which they ought to have done long ago in the interests of the Church: tardily they are giving us a measure for which we fought many years ago, which measure will be, as they themselves have expressed it, simply another step in the direction of Disestablishment. (Hear, hear.) Yes, gentlemen, there is a hand unseen and a voice unspoken, according to the Tory papers, which are urging on this matter, and that voice and that hand are the persistent efforts which by tongue and pen are being made by the agents of this society. Another cause for congratulation is the excellent temper with which this great controversy has been carried on. I am told that in Damascus when one of the blades is tested, the proof of it is that the point shall reach the hilt and spring back again into its place. I think the Liberation Society has been so tested; it is shown to be of good steel; it has been a thoroughly tried weapon which has been the means of doing the work which we are rejoicing over to-day. Through evil report and good report we have worked, and there have been some who cannot help thinking of in the past who are not with us now, who would have rejoiced to see this day. We can say of them as has been said of other worthies, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but were persuaded of them," and were convinced that the time will come when victory will crown the efforts of this society, because it is based upon what is just and right towards our fellow men. The next point I would refer to as a cause for congratulation is our cheering prospects. One of these cheering prospects is the increasing intelligence of the day; another is the desire for Christian unity which, I believe, pervades all classes of the people, and that desire can only be accomplished in its fulness and completeness when the Established Church ceases to exist, not as a Church, but as an agent of the State, under the control of the State, sometimes defying the State. (Hear, hear.) Another cause, I think, we have for congratulation is the divisions in the clerical camp. Now, we are not of those who hail these divisions with any feelings of pleasure; divisions amongst Christian men are at all times to be deplored, but when divisions exist as arising out of a growth of true principles, then we hail them, and we believe that those divisions are things to culminate in such a way as to be for the advantage of this society. The *Standard* newspaper in reference to the Mackonockie case says, "How is such a scandal to be terminated? That is the question of the day." And it further remarks, "It is now beginning to be said by the opponents of these men that if the State cannot protect them they must try what they can do without the State; so that while the Ritualists look to Disestablishment, to save themselves from the moderate party, the moderate party are looking to Disestablishment to save themselves from the Ritualists." You see then, that on both sides the only solution of the question seems to be to let everyone follow that course which in his conscience he deems right, and we, as Liberationists, have no quarrel with such men; we say, let all have a fair field and no favour. Another point to which I would refer is that repressive measures have done something to promote the prospects of the Liberation Society. That Public Worship Regulation Bill, which was to settle everything in the Church of England, has unsettled everything, and this is only in accordance with what might have been supposed, for we find that men who have lived before us have come to the conclusion that these repressive measures have never any beneficial result to the parties who adopt them. Lord Mansfield, many years ago, said, "There is nothing more unreasonable, more inconsistent with the right of human nature, more contrary to the spirit and prospects of the Christian religion, more iniquitous and unjust, more unpolitic than persecution; it is against natural religion, revealed religion, and sound policy." We believe that this Public Worship Regulation Act has proved the truth of Lord Mansfield's words, and although we express no opinion with respect to it, we cannot but rejoice that it has brought about results which in our judgment will be beneficial to the Church, as well as to society at large. Another point is that the bishops' prophecies are cause for congratulation. The Bishop of Lincoln looks upon the Church as in a state of peril, and he looks upon evils unforeseen as coming upon society. Well, we have had these prophecies before, and we have only had them to feel that, for the most part, if not altogether, the prophecies of bishops are never fulfilled. (Laughter.) Consequently, looking at what they tell us with regard to the future, we may, I think, come to the conclusion that a period of great prosperity is before the Church. These prophecies were very freely expressed during the Irish experiment, but they all failed. Things were to be turned upside down, everything was to be put out of joint; but since the Disestablishment Ireland has gone on, we hope, better than before, and we trust that the spiritual privileges and the religious enjoyments of the people are greater, and not less, than they were when the Established Church existed. The next problem to be solved is the Scotch Disestablishment question—(hear, hear)—but as most likely, this afternoon, some of our Scotch friends will address you on that sub-

ject, I feel that I need not make any observation excepting to say that the signs of the times, so far as I can read them, point to an early cessation of that Establishment. Well, gentlemen, I feel that I have occupied as much of your time as it is proper that I should do on an occasion like this. The work we have yet to do is persistent, steady labour; it must be continuous, it must be unflinching, it must be uncompromising. We must not be content with the Burial Bill as a settlement of all questions between ourselves and the members of the Establishment. We must not bate one jot or tittle of our claim to full and perfect religious equality. It is not for sect or party, but for principle that we contend, and the fight must be maintained until we secure complete victory for religious freedom from all contamination with or control by the State. (Cheers.)

Mr. PULLAR (Perth) moved the appointment of the Business Committee, to consist of the following gentlemen:—Mr. Ald. Joseph Thompson, Manchester; Mr. E. S. Robinson, Bristol; Mr. Ald. Gripper, Nottingham; Rev. H. W. Crosskey, Birmingham; Dr. Webster, M.P., Aberdeen; Mr. W. Woodall, M.P., Stoke; Mr. Illingworth, M.P., Bradford; Sir Peter Spokes, Reading; Rev. Chas. Williams, Accrington; Mr. H. R. Ellington, London; Mr. J. Carvell Williams, London.

Mr. NICHOLSON (Leek) seconded the resolution, which was unanimously adopted.

### THE COMMITTEE OF SELECTION.

Mr. HENRY WRIGHT, in moving the appointment of the Committee of Selection, said that the position in which they found themselves on that occasion reminded them of the great obligation they were under to the council who had conducted the proceedings of the Liberation Society during the last three years; and the business to be brought forward during the next three years suggested the importance of choosing strong, courageous, intelligent, earnest men to do the work. He therefore proposed the appointment of a committee to select the council, so that they might feel that the matter was really in their own hands. He begged to move—

That the following gentlemen be a committee to select and present to the Conference the names of gentlemen to act as treasurers, auditors, Executive Committee, and council for the next three years:—Mr. Joseph Ashworth, Rochdale; Mr. Affleck, Manchester; Mr. Joshua Nicholson, Leek; Rev. Dr. Stock, Huddersfield; Rev. J. Brown, Bradford; Mr. G. H. Baines, Leicester; Rev. W. Griffith, Derby; Mr. H. Payton, Birmingham; Mr. P. P. Perry, Northampton; Mr. M. J. Whibley, Cambridge; Mr. J. Wicks, janr., Colchester; Mr. J. S. Pearce, Southampton; Mr. David Lloyd, Bristol; Mr. J. Cory, Cardiff; Mr. T. Williams, Morthyr; Mr. James Stewart, Glasgow; Mr. John Pullar, Bridge of Allan; Mr. A. H. Haggis, London; Mr. P. Crellin, London; Mr. J. Carvell Williams, London.

Mr. W. BAINES (Leicester) seconded the motion.

Mr. CHICK moved as an amendment—

That the reference to the committee read as follows:—"That in selecting the names for the Executive Committee, in order to obtain the active co-operation of all sections of the Liberal party in advancing the objects of the Liberation Society, special reference should be had to prominent and active members of the various Liberal Associations in the metropolis."

It was well known, he said, that the metropolis was behind the rest of the country on the question of Liberation. It was also well known that the recent election in many of the boroughs was won not only by the principles which the Liberal party espoused, but by the organisation which they had, and if the information obtained by many of the members of those organisations could be brought to bear in connection with the Liberation Society, they would be far more likely to advance the interests of the society than by merely working outside the organisation of the Liberal party as it at present existed.

Mr. T. C. POTTO (Tower Hamlets) seconded the amendment.

Mr. J. STEWART (Hastings) said that there were other places quite as dark as London, and he suggested that the matter should be left in the hands of the committee.

A DELEGATE suggested that the committee should be appointed first, and the instruction moved afterwards.

This course being assented to, the committee as proposed was appointed, and Mr. Chick's instruction was agreed to, with the substitution of the word "country" for "metropolis."

Mr. ROBJOHNS then read the

### REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The last Triennial Conference of the Society assembled in this hall at a period of great national excitement and anxiety. War had broken out in Eastern Europe; and there was violent contention at home in regard to the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government then in office. Up to that time the Society had been able to proceed, without hindrance, with the execution of the plans for extended action which had been resolved upon at the Conference of 1874. But the absorption of the public mind in the struggle then pending, and in the danger of European complications affecting the interests of this country, soon began to have an important influence, not only upon the operations of this society, but upon almost all movements bearing upon domestic affairs. The wars which followed in Afghanistan and South Africa had the effect of continuing the public excitement after the Eastern question had passed through



its most dangerous crisis. There then followed anticipations of the General Election, which, it was assumed, could not be long delayed. These causes combined rendered it difficult for the committee to continue with equal energy the work which had been pursued from 1874 to 1877; and compelled them to shape their course with regard to public feeling, and to adapt themselves to the exigencies of almost the passing hour. Notwithstanding, however, these apparently adverse conditions, they entertain the confident belief that the question of disestablishment has continued steadily to gravitate out of the region of abstract principle into that of practical politics. If it had been doubtful previously, no one, after the decisive events of the last few weeks, can question that at the present moment it occupies a position in advance of that which it held in 1877, and greatly in advance of that of 1874. It is acknowledged that the influence of the friends of Religious Equality was never before so strong; and it is equally certain that the fears of the supporters of Church Establishments have never been so loudly expressed.

#### PUBLICATIONS, LECTURES, AND MEETINGS.

At no meeting in the society's history have its publications been distributed on so large a scale, or, it is believed, with such effect, as during the past three years. The number has not been less than seven millions. The bulk of these have been tracts, leaflets, and placards; but the number also includes valuable pamphlets on the property and revenues of the English Church Establishment, the Burial question, the Established Church in Scotland, and the jubilee of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. There has, too, been a gradual increase in the circulation of the society's journal—the *Liberator*, which is now largely quoted by the newspaper press. The committee are about to consider what literature will best suit the present position of the society's work. It is a department to the extension of which there is scarcely any other limit than that imposed by the condition of the society's finances.

During the late triennial period the meetings and lectures held have been nearly two thousand in number. They have embraced almost the whole country, and have been very varied in their character. If the society's platform work has of late been less than it would have been under circumstances other than just described, it is satisfactory to report that, to the extent to which it has been carried on, it has excited undiminished interest. The attendances at meetings have been gratifying, the information imparted has had a valuable educational influence, and in many cases local discussions have followed, which have yet further tended to stimulate the public mind. During the past year, in expectation of the General Election, this department of the society's operations has been mainly confined to Parliamentary boroughs and to other districts in which electoral results might reasonably be anticipated—a policy which those results have fully justified. In view of the probable early extension of the franchise, the committee will renew their educational work in the counties; that the newly enfranchised population may exercise their trust with a knowledge of, and an interest in, the principles which the society seeks to advance.

#### THE SOCIETY'S FINANCES.

It would have been impossible for the committee to have sustained their operations on the extensive scale of the last six years, apart from the liberality of the society's friends in raising the special fund which was resolved upon by the Conference of 1874. The commercial depression which began shortly afterwards interfered with the complete carrying out of the financial scheme then initiated; but, notwithstanding that fact, the society had been able during the past six years to expend a sum amounting to nearly eighty-one thousand pounds. The Committee are of opinion that the expenditure has been timely, and that it has greatly increased the society's influence and power. They, however, do not consider that the time has yet come for the renewal of the special appeal made to their friends six years ago, and will, therefore, for a time, regulate their expenditure with regard to their ordinary resources. Instead of reverting to either the expenditure or the work of former years, they will appeal to the general body of subscribers to increase, as far as possible, the amount of their present subscriptions, and also endeavour largely to extend the list of subscribers to the society's funds.

#### THE BURIALS QUESTION.

Considering the composition of the Parliament which has lately been dissolved, and of the Government which has now ceased to exist, the Conference will not be surprised to learn that, so far as measures conducive to religious equality are concerned, the last three years have been years of absolute barrenness. On the other hand, notwithstanding the existence of a hostile majority in Parliament, it has been possible, by vigilance and by firmness, to prevent the success of a seriously reactionary policy. As compensation, to some extent, for the failure of practical legislation, there has been a considerable growth of opinion, both in and out of Parliament in favour of the abolition of the existing restrictions on burials in parochial graveyards.

At the last Conference, the Burials Bill of the late Government had been read a second time in the House of Lords. Subsequently, the clause providing for silent burial was abandoned; and, after two now historic divisions, Lord Harrowby succeeded in carrying an amendment, which embodied the principle of Mr. Osborne Morgan's Bill. Lord Harrowby's success, however, proved fatal to the Bill, which, as the result of clerical menaces, was abandoned by its authors. In the following Session, Mr. Morgan, in lieu of bringing in a Bill, substituted a motion, which affirmed, in the most direct terms, the broad principle for which the society has always contended. On a division, it was lost, in a full House, by a majority of fifteen only, several Conservatives being found among its supporters. In the Session of 1879, Mr. Morgan again brought in his Bill, but was unable to obtain a day for its discussion. No fewer than five other Bills were also at the same time before Parliament, four of them emanating from Conservative members. Of these, one only became law, that entitled "The Public Health Act (1875)

Amendment (Interments) Act," brought in by Mr. Marten. This measure was carried in the House of Commons only by a series of manoeuvres, and was forced through the Upper House by the influence of the late Government. It was, however, so ill-constructed, that, up to the present time, it has proved to be almost inoperative. The passing of such a measure, however, had the effect of placing the question in an altogether new position; and, accordingly, on the reassembling of the late Parliament this year, Mr. Morgan gave notice of a resolution which affirmed that the laws relating to burials in England and Wales should be amended and consolidated, and that such funeral services as might be preferred by the relatives of deceased persons should be permitted in all parochial and district burial places, whether churchyards or cemeteries, without regard to any distinction between consecrated and unconsecrated ground. The discussion of this resolution was prevented by the dissolution in March last—an event, however, which has had the effect of bringing within sight the end of this long-standing and painful controversy.

The effect of previous agitation on the subject was decisively felt in the elections which followed. Every Liberal candidate, without exception, pledged himself to support the immediate removal of the existing disability. The result of this, and of the return of a great Liberal majority, has been that the Government which has lately come into office has promptly brought in a Bill for the purpose of effecting that object. The opinion of the committee in regard to that measure is expressed in the following resolutions, which were passed shortly after its appearance:—

- 1.—The Committee highly appreciate the promptitude with which Her Majesty's Government has brought in a measure for putting an end to the controversies which have arisen with respect to burials in churchyards and cemeteries, and, inasmuch as it is mainly based upon the principle of Mr. Morgan's Bill, which for many years they have sought to pass they are glad to give it their support; while holding themselves free to object to certain of its provisions.
- 2.—They regard the requirement that all burial services should be "Christian," and the prohibition of "any address not being part of, or incidental to, a religious service" (Clauses 6 and 7), as being neither called for by the necessities of the case, nor consistent with the principle, affirmed by the Lord Chancellor on the introduction of the Bill, that the civil right of burial should not be fettered by ecclesiastical conditions.

- 3.—They regret that the Bill does not abolish all legal distinctions between consecrated and unconsecrated grounds and chapels in parochial cemeteries, and thereby relieve Burial Boards from obligations which, when the Bill has become law, will be without practical utility, and will involve vexatious difficulty and expense. They are also of opinion that the numerous Acts of Parliament under which parochial burial-places are provided require to be hereafter consolidated and amended.

- 4.—While the Committee are not opposed to a relaxation of the restrictions now imposed on the clergy in regard to the use of the Burial Service of the Church of England, they strongly object to the recital in the Bill (Clause 11) of the proceedings of the Houses of Convocation, as the basis of legislation in reference to such Service.

That the Bill has, after a comparatively feeble opposition, been read a second time in the House of Lords by the decisive majority of 25 (126 to 101), and has been supported by no fewer than ten members of the Episcopal bench, shows how great has been the progress made since 1876, when Earl Granville's motion was defeated by a majority of 56, and his lordship received the support of one solitary bishop.\* It may now be assumed that the Bill will have the sanction of the Legislature; but as much difference of opinion exists among both its supporters and opponents, in regard to certain of its provisions, the shape which it will ultimately assume may be regarded as uncertain, and considerable care may be required in dealing with the several amendments which are likely to be proposed in one or other Houses of Parliament. That the Bill, when it becomes law, will finally dispose of the Burials question the committee do not believe; but they do believe that it will render the settlement of remaining questions comparatively easy, and will hereafter be regarded as one of the most important of recent Parliamentary measures.

#### IRISH ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS.

It was evident in 1878 that there was a danger of, at least, a partial reversion to the policy which the Legislature had deliberately adopted in discontinuing ecclesiastical grants to religious bodies in Ireland. The Intermediate Education Act, which appropriated a million of the Irish Church surplus, was the first of a series of demands of an ecclesiastical or quasi-ecclesiastical character. It was also believed that the Government was not unwilling to concede the demands of the Roman Catholic hierarchy for the endowment of a denominational university, if such demands could be brought within moderate limits. Failure at arriving at an agreement delayed the procedure of the Government; but their hand was practically forced by the action of the O'CONNOR DON, who, in a skillfully-drafted Bill, proposed to appropriate a million and a half of the Irish Church surplus to the endowment of a professedly undenominational university, while at the same time he provided for the affiliation, and the indirect endowment, of any number of denominational colleges, and also aimed a blow at the Queen's University and Colleges, which were established for the promotion of mixed and unsectarian education. The Bill was, however, withdrawn, in consequence of a sudden intimation by the Government of their intention to introduce a measure of their own. That measure did not, on the face of it, violate any principle upheld by Voluntaries; but it provided for the dissolution of the Queen's University, to which, as well as to the Queen's Colleges, the Roman Catholic hierarchy have always been opposed. The Bill, which, in an altered form, ultimately became law, did not indicate the source from which the endowment of the new university is to be provided; and it devolves upon the Senate, created by the lately issued charter, to frame a scheme which will practically determine the complexion of the university. As that scheme must be submitted to Parliament for its sanction, the subject is one which will

call for further attention, and will need to be carefully watched.

So long as any part of the Irish Church surplus remains unappropriated there will be a danger of its application to purposes different from those indicated by the Act of 1869, viz., the relief of unavoidable suffering and calamity. In addition to the sum appropriated to the purposes of intermediate education in Ireland, a sum of £1,300,000 has been voted for the pensioning of Irish national school teachers; and, encouraged by the success of previous claimants, the curates and minor incumbent of the Disestablished Irish Church have now induced Mr. Plunkett to bring in a measure which, after the lapse of a decade from the passing of the Church Act, actually proposes to give to them additional compensation. Remembering with what prodigal liberality the Legislature dealt with the clerical claims in 1869, it can scarcely be expected that an Administration with Mr. Gladstone at its head will entertain claims of so utterly unreasonable a character.

#### ECCLESIASTICAL GRANTS IN CEYLON AND INDIA.

During the sittings of the last conference Mr. W. McArthur submitted to the House of Commons a resolution aiming at the abolition of ecclesiastical grants in Ceylon. It was defeated by a majority of only 26. That motion will now be renewed under more favourable circumstances. It may be anticipated with confidence that the present Government will not follow the example of their predecessors, who not only refused to comply with the prayer contained in a largely-signed memorial to the Queen from natives and other inhabitants of Ceylon, but treated the appeal with culpable official neglect. The Singalese are now about to make an appeal to the Legislature, and it may be hoped that it will meet with a favourable response from the newly-elected Parliament.

It has been only lately that Mr. Baxter has obtained a return, moved for by him in 1877, relative to the expenditure of the ecclesiastical department of the Government of India. The present almost desperate financial condition of India has given a new importance to this question. Even the late Government had felt it to be necessary to pass a measure for the reduction of the salaries and allowances of officials of the ecclesiastical and other departments. How far that measure will prove operative will probably depend upon the influence of public opinion at home, and, seeing that neither the natives of India nor Ceylon are represented in the British Parliament, it is the more incumbent upon those who have succeeded in extinguishing ecclesiastical grants in this country to assist their fellow-subjects in distant parts of the world to obtain relief from similar burdens.

#### DISESTABLISHMENT IN SCOTLAND.

In their report of the last Triennial Conference, the committee fully described the effect which had been produced by the passing of the Act to Amend the Law of Patronage in Scotland. All that has happened since has been in strict accordance with the expectations which were then expressed. The cause of Disestablishment in Scotland has, in the interval, made unchecked and rapid progress. It was in the November following the Conference that Lord Hartington practically defined the future policy of the Liberal party in reference to this question, when he said that "whenever Scotch opinion, or even Scotch Liberal opinion, is fully formed on this subject, the Liberal party, as a whole, will be prepared to deal with the question on its merits, and without reference to any other consideration." The discussion in the House of Commons in the following year on proposals for inquiring into the operations on the Patronage Act, made it evident that no change in the relations between ecclesiastical bodies and the State short of Disestablishment is likely to be either approved by the people, or adopted by Parliament. Further evidence of that fact is found in the attitude of the unestablished Presbyterian bodies, which, year by year, with growing emphasis, as well as increasing numbers, affirm that it is absolutely essential in the interests of justice, of peace, and of union, that the State should withdraw its support, and cease to exercise patronage and authority over a Church which no longer expresses the feelings, nor satisfies the wants, of a majority of the Scottish nation.

It is not in ecclesiastical associations alone that this tendency of the national mind in Scotland is apparent. The recent General Election, although occurring under circumstances which placed Disestablishment in a secondary rather than a primary position, nevertheless manifested the keen interest in the question felt by the electoral body, and the determination of the majority to return as members those only who were either pledged to the abolition of the existing system, or were willing to deal with it at a future period. Notwithstanding the utmost exertions of the supporters of the Establishment, almost the whole of the Members returned by Scotland are either distinctly in favour of disestablishing the Church of Scotland, or are prepared to accept the decision of the Scottish people in regard to it, or will follow the Liberal leaders, and not one solitary Liberal Member has ventured to publicly declare himself as opposed to such a policy.

Gratifying as is this result, the committee are of opinion that it in no degree justifies a slackening of effort on the part of their supporters and allies; on the contrary, it imposes upon them new duties and responsibilities. Whatever necessity there might have been for observing partial silence on this subject at the General Election, that necessity exists no longer; and to hold the question in abeyance until the approach of another election would be to justify allegations that the feeling in favour of Disestablishment had subsided, or become weaker. Unless there be a continued advance, there must be a danger of retrogression. There is yet work to be done to further ripen public opinion in Scotland; to disseminate information regarding the practical measures involved in Disestablishment and Disendowment, and to bind together in one firm phalanx those who, on various grounds, believe that the welfare of the people will best be promoted by the abolition of the existing politico-ecclesiastical system. The course which should be pursued in Parliament will require careful deliberation; but, meanwhile, the Exe-

cutive Committee confide in the wisdom, as well as the earnestness, of the society's Scottish Council—which has been formed since the last Triennial Conference, and from which they have received valuable assistance, and which is prepared heartily to co-operate with other bodies aiming at the same object as themselves.

#### GENERAL ELECTION, 1880.

Reference has already been made in this report to the approach of the General Election, as having interfered with the ordinary operations of the Society. It also raised questions which, for a time, occasioned some perplexity to the committee. Six years ago they had contemplated the possibility of giving to the question of Disestablishment far greater electoral prominence than on any previous occasion; and they had hoped that the educational work then about to be carried on with increased vigour would tell with great and obvious effect upon the electoral body when it was next appealed to. They at the same time recognised—as they have always done—the duty of exercising such electoral influence as they possessed with a patriotic regard to the general interests of the nation. When, therefore, it became evident that, in the opinion of the great majority of the society's supporters, the primary question for decision at the General Election was the displacement of the then existing Government; and that there must be an avoidance of all divisions in the Liberal ranks, the committee felt bound so to shape their electoral policy as not in any way to frustrate that purpose. While, therefore, they resolved to secure the return, wherever practicable, of candidates favourable to Disestablishment—and more especially in Scotland—they determined to press upon the notice of candidates and electors the ecclesiastical questions which required immediate solution at the hands of the Legislature, rather than those larger questions in regard to which immediate Parliamentary action could not be anticipated.

The committee are happy to believe that this policy had the approval of the great mass, if not the whole, of the supporters of the society as well as to know that its adoption led to results the decisiveness of which has been generally acknowledged. When the dissolution of Parliament was announced in March last, they placed themselves in communication with Liberal candidates, and with their principal supporters, in all the constituencies, posted large numbers of suitable placards in most of the English and Welsh boroughs, and circulated publications affording information on ecclesiastical topics of immediate interest or importance. It is never possible to accurately estimate the practical effects of such exertions; but in reference to the general results of the election, in their bearing on the society's objects, there is no room for doubt.

Although the main issue decided at the election made it necessary, as already stated, for the society to hold somewhat in abeyance its distinctive objects, sixteen members of its Executive Committee were returned to Parliament; there was elected a far larger number of members in favour of Disestablishment than have sat in any previous Parliament; while the results of the elections in Scotland indicated the approach of the time when complete success will crown the efforts of the society in that country.

The late election has revealed to all classes of politicians some important facts, and taught some significant lessons. It has shown the supporters of Church Establishments to be more divided in opinion and action than on many former occasions, and it has also made them painfully conscious of the degree in which such institutions are dependent upon political events and party exigencies. It has further shown to the friends of Religious Equality the extent to which they are able, by means of energy and discipline, to determine the strength and the policy of the party with which they are, for the most part, associated. The frankness with which this has been recognised should be regarded by them, less as a matter of congratulation, than as affording a strong stimulus to future electoral exertion. It has cost them long years of patient effort to attain to their present position. It will now be incumbent upon them to strive to permeate the majority of the electoral body with the sentiments which have acquired such vital force; to the end that their ultimate success may be the result of national conviction, expressed by constitutional methods, and embodied in Legislative measures of lasting value.

#### EVENTS IN THE ENGLISH ESTABLISHMENT.

In the early days of this Society its efforts were derided, as being directed against an institution too firmly fixed in the national affections, and too closely united with the State, ever to be endangered by any assaults from without. Such assertions are now made in but faltering accents, and, when made, are usually accompanied by the statement that, if the English Establishment falls, it will be mainly the result of internal difficulties and divisions. This feeling has been expressed with increasing frequency and emphasis during the last few years, and it must be admitted, not without adequate cause. The period has been one of dissension, of litigation, and of bitter antagonism. The *Ridgdale* judgment—the *Hatcham* case—the *St. Alban* case, and the *Clewer* case; with the names of Mr. Toth, Mr. Mackenzie, Canon Carter, Bishop Mackarness, and Lord Penzance; and the mention of the Public Worship Regulation Act and the Church Discipline Act, recall events which have not only kept the English Church in a state of continued ferment, but have filled the minds of many of its members with feelings of shame and humiliation. Nor has the effect been less decisive as regards the community at large, which, however little interested in the quarrels of ecclesiastics and their adherents, desires to maintain respect for constituted authorities, and obedience to the law on the part of official persons, in ecclesiastical as well as in civil, establishments of the State. Public patience is in such matters great; but it has its limits, and the time will come, when the conviction that an end must be put to scandals so grave as those witnessed in connection with the English Establishment will give a new and powerful impetus to the demand for Disestab-

\* The Bishop of Exeter.



lishment. Nor will the leaven of right principle spread with less certainty in the minds of those who, while they would gladly maintain an ancient system which they have highly valued, will not do so at the sacrifice of what they regard as interests of paramount importance. When the Bishop of Oxford deprecates "the wrangle in the law-courts," as not being a method sanctioned by the Gospel for the settlement of ecclesiastical disputes, and insists that what is needed is the "decisive voice of the whole Christian society, clerical and lay, on the points in dispute," he, however unconsciously, virtually surrenders the position of a defender of Church Establishments and occupies that of an upholder of one of the essential principles of Voluntaryism.

Other minds cannot but be powerfully influenced by the apparent impossibility of eradicating evils of a different class which exist in the Church of England, as a result of its position as an Establishment. The consciences of Episcopalians have but slowly been awakened to the gross immorality, and to the enormous evils, of the traffic in Church livings, and of some other results of the existing law of patronage. There have been Bills, and motions, and committees of inquiry on the subject in Parliament; and it has now been reported upon by a Royal Commission, comprising some of the ablest and most influential representatives of the Church. The Commissioners have collected a body of evidence which has confirmed previous impressions as to the scandalous character, and the baneful consequences, of some of the methods of appointing the Established clergy—methods adopted either in accordance with law, or by an evasion of the law. Happily, such disclosures could be made in connection with no other religious community; but, unhappily, the facts are too familiar to shock, as they should do, the public mind. What is more important, and more serious, the Commissioners have shown by their report an apparent unconsciousness of the real source of the evil, as well as unwillingness to suggest any real remedy. They affirm the sound principle that patronage is in the nature of a trust, and then they propose new regulations for the sale of patronage rights. They propose to repress the grosser abuses, but not to eradicate the root of the abuses; and, instead of wishing to extinguish an iniquitous traffic, they appear to be chiefly anxious that it should be carried on in privacy, and not be used by the supposed enemies of the Church to its disadvantage as an Establishment. The committee are fully aware of the great difficulties involved in any changes in the existing law of patronage; they are, indeed, difficulties which will be insuperable as long as ministers are appointed by public law, and maintained by public property. They have, however, all been solved in the Episcopal Church in Ireland since it has ceased to be established; they will be solved on this side the Channel when the members of the sister Church are placed in the same position, and not at any earlier period.

## OBITUARY.

As the society advances in years it loses by death with increasing rapidity its earliest friends, and not a few of those whose continued service might have been confidently hoped for. During the past three years there have disappeared from the list of its supporters the well-known names of George Haddfield, John Childs, Henry Vincent, Dr. McKerrow, Henry Renton, Dr. Harper, George Pearson, Sir Titus Salt, J. R. Mills, John Crossley, John Gordon, Samuel Watts, J. S. Wright, Wm. Braden, as well as of two of its official representatives—John Henry Gordon and Andrew Carey Fuller. These names, added to those of the departed in previous years, are associated with recollections of the past history of the society, which may well stimulate the younger men who have entered on their labours. And to those who have not yet devoted themselves to this noble service, the committee now appeal to enter their ranks, for the completion of the work begun in faith, long carried on in the face of seemingly insuperable difficulties, but now certain to be crowned with complete success. With the Conference which meets to-day, the society enters on a new stage of the conflict which for thirty-six years it has waged with unflinching energy, and the hearts of all who are engaged in it—from the oldest veteran to the youngest recruit—may be sustained by the assurance that the achievements of the past will be followed by others of even greater magnitude, and which are certain to prove lastingly beneficial to the nation.

Mr. ELLINGTON, the treasurer, presented the financial statement, which showed that the receipts, with the balance, had been £11,398 18s. 8d., the payments £10,818 14s. 5d., and the balance in hand £580 4s. 3d.

The CHAIRMAN called attention to the fact that there were fourteen members of Parliament on the platform.

Mr. J. CARVELL WILLIAMS said that Mr. Stansfeld, M.P., desired it to be known that he would have been present but for a special engagement elsewhere; and letters had been received from other members of Parliament who were not then present.

## RESOLUTION ON THE REPORT.

Mr. HENRY RICHARD, M.P., who was received with loud cheers, moved the following resolution:—

That the report of the Executive Committee and the treasurer's account be adopted by the Conference. While the absorption of the public mind in questions of foreign policy and in electoral changes has, during the past three years, placed difficulties in the way of the Executive Committee, the Conference believes that there has, throughout that time, been a continuous growth of public opinion in favour of the society's principles; and it now anticipates with confidence the passing of further measures for the promotion of religious equality, as well as a renewal of vigorous agitation for the complete accomplishment of the society's work.

\* Letter to the Chairman of the Church Association.

He said: I am afraid I am not in a very good condition to address this meeting to-day, for I have grown hoarse in shouting to the large crowds of my countrymen who swarmed yesterday into the Crystal Palace; for with that insatiable appetite for speaking and hearing speeches which is characteristic of my dear countrymen, they insisted upon my speaking—once in Welsh and once in English, and it was difficult for me to resist their kindly importunity, considering the peculiar circumstances under which we met. We met to commemorate a great Liberal victory, under which, out of thirty representatives sent by the Principality to the House of Commons, twenty-eight were Liberals—(cheers)—and of those twenty-eight I am happy to say nine were Nonconformists. Of the whole twenty-eight I doubt if one would vote against a motion for Disestablishment, while the great majority are prepared and pledged to vote in its support. (Hear, hear.) I suppose I owe the distinction of being asked to move this first resolution to the melancholy privilege of age. I am afraid I must say that I am one of the oldest living friends of the society. I was present at its birth in 1844; I helped to celebrate its majority; I have watched its growth and development and all the varied vicissitudes of its fortunes for thirty-six years. I have seen the little one become a thousand, and the small one, if not a mighty nation, at least a great power in the heart of this mighty nation. I assure some of the younger members of this Conference that it required not a little courage in those early days to belong to this society. I remember when I, as a young man, in a timid sort of way, I used to defend the society by pointing to the necessity and value of its services, I used to be confronted with this question, "Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed in it?" (Cheers.) And certainly a great many of the Dissenting rulers and Pharisees in those days did not believe in it. They looked askance at it; they frowned upon it; and when they met it in any of the highways of public life, they were wont carefully to gather their skirts around them, and pass by on the other side. (Laughter.) But even then some of the noblest names of the Nonconformist community identified themselves with it; as you will acknowledge when I mention the names of John Burnet, Dr. Wardlaw, Dr. Pye-Smith, Dr. Young, of Perth, Dr. Cox, Dr. Price; and among the laymen of Joseph Sturge, Apsley Pellatt, Josiah Conder, and others whose names I could mention; all of whom have, alas! now disappeared. But the greatest of them all, the central figure around whom they all gathered, to whose faith, and courage, and high principle the existence of the society is owing, and who for so many years led, and guided, and stimulated, remains unto this day. (Loud cheers.) I am very glad that he is able to be present with us to-day, to afford us this opportunity of which you have so gladly availed yourselves, to present to him once more our respectful, affectionate, and enthusiastic greetings; and to tell him how deeply we venerate his character, appreciate his services, and feel the inspiration of his spirit and example. (Enthusiastic cheers, the whole meeting rising in response, and repeatedly cheering.) Six years ago, Mr. Chairman, I occupied the position that you now enjoy. It was rather a dark and depressing time, for the Liberal party had sustained a general rout, and the country, in an evil moment, had pronounced that verdict in favour of the Conservative party which it has had such ample occasion to rue since. (Laughter.) It was my duty then to rally our scattered forces and to infuse spirit into them in the day of defeat. I thought it was my duty; but I soon found that in attempting to discharge it, I was performing a work of supererogation; for the men that were gathered on that occasion, which, I think, was almost a larger gathering than this, I found did not abate one jot of heart or hope. They were alert, resolute, full of fight—that is, in a moral sense, of course—(laughter)—"for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." They manifested the spirit of the English drummer-boy, who, when captured by the French and asked to play a retreat as a specimen of his drumming, said he had had no practice, because the English army never retreated. Upon that occasion I gave a rather elaborate historical review of the progress of the great question of Religious Liberty for fifty years from the time of the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. I will not attempt to-day to travel over the same ground. It will be enough to mention in a sentence or two the advances that have been made since this society has been in existence, and in promoting which it has borne no inconsiderable part. We have seen the *Regium Donum*, a miserable pittance doled out by the Government to Dissenting ministers (which exposed us to the constant reproach of inconsistency, and paralysed our advocacy of a great principle), abolished. We have seen both the education and the management in the endowed schools thrown open, at least, in part, to the Nonconformists. We have seen the offensive declaration that barred the admission of Nonconformists to municipal offices, swept away by the gallant perseverance of our old friend Mr. Haddfield. We have

seen the National Universities which for 200 years had been regarded as a sort of preserve for the Established Church, opened to the whole of the people, first as respects degrees, and afterwards as regards fellowships and professorships. We have seen the revised Burial Laws, which, as far as cemeteries are concerned, place Churchmen and Dissenters upon a footing of equality, and we are about to see the last remnant of ecclesiastical ascendancy in the churchyards swept away. (Cheers.) We have seen the Jews admitted to Parliament. We have seen the Church rates abolished. We have seen, first, Ministers' Money in Ireland, and, afterwards, the Annuity Tax in Edinburgh follow the same fate. We have seen, first, the clergy reserves in Canada taken away, and then all State grants in South Australia, in New South Wales, in Queensland, in Victoria, in New Zealand, in Jamaica, in Honduras, in Antigua, in St. Kitts, in Grenada, in Mauritius, and in Cape Colony done away with. (Hear, hear.) And those that are now made in India and in Ceylon are likely to yield soon to the assaults of Mr. McArthur and Mr. Baxter. We have seen the Irish Church disestablished and disendowed, and we must take care that the endowments of that Church are not again appropriated by plausible and covert pretexts to endow virtually another Church out of the surplus of what was once a Protestant establishment. (Hear, hear.) Well, this is not a bad record for thirty-six years; but I attach more importance than I do to these measures, very considerable as they are, to the altered tone of the public mind in regard to the great question that we have in hand. Mark, in the first place, the different estimation in which this society is held and those promoting its objects. I can remember the time when, if our Church friends deigned to recognise our existence at all, it was with marks of ineffable disdain. In our attempts to build our little society, they addressed us very much as Tobiah the Ammonite addressed those who were building the walls of Jerusalem, "What do the feeble Jews? Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall." (Laughter.) Now, instead of that, we have them acknowledging in terms of almost extravagant mingled laudation and terror, the formidable character of our organisation. There was a time when any member of either House of Parliament would have disdained to mention even the name of the Liberation Society, but now the Liberation Society and Mr. Carvell Williams are "familiar in men's mouths as household words"—not from my lips, but from the lips of Mr. Beresford Hope, who, I think, regards Mr. Williams as very nearly the incarnation of the Evil One. (Laughter.) Well, gentlemen, there are many influences that I think are tending in the direction which we are seeking to attain. One of these has been already referred to by my hon. friend in the chair, and that is, the discord and anarchy prevailing within the Church itself, and this arising—let us acknowledge it with pleasure—from the increase of spiritual life in the Church; for, as I ventured to say in the House of Commons when they were discussing the Public Worship Regulation Bill, you can do what you please with dead timber; you can carve and cut it and fashion and form it into any shape you please, but a living tree refuses to be compressed and managed by mechanical appliances—(cheers)—and just in proportion, I believe, as spiritual life spreads in the Church, in that proportion will this element of discord and anarchy within its own bosom increase. Well, as my friend has very properly said, we cannot rejoice in the existence of such scenes in the midst of any Christian Church, yet we can rejoice, if we believe, as we do, that these are the throes of a travail which betokens a deliverance from State control. Then there is another favourable circumstance, and that is that there is a conviction, or perhaps I should say for the present a suspicion, growing in the minds of many thoughtful members of the Church of England, that a deteriorating and disastrous influence is exerted by the union of the Church and State over the character and over the ministrations of the English clergy; and what has happened within the last three years has tended very much to intensify those feelings. There have been many searchings of heart among conscientious Churchmen because they are beginning to doubt, when they have seen the official guardians of the national conscience and the national religion and morality standing dumb in the presence of great iniquities committed by those in high places, whether there was not something wrong in the position which imposed that silence upon them at such a time. Let us all be just, and admit that there have been some noble exceptions. There have been some splendid utterances on this question from members of the Established Church and others, from members of the episcopal bench; and in no paper have there been utterances more worthy of a Christian journal than in the *Guardian*. Nothing could be better, more lofty in tone, more courageous in spirit, more earnest and eloquent in expression than the articles by which that journal smote the policy of aggression and bloodshed which this country has had to deplore. Still, as a class, the fact was that the English clergy were dumb in the presence of these iniquities. No man recognised the fact more clearly

than our great leader, Mr. Gladstone. (Cheers.) You will remember the memorable words which he addressed to some of my countrymen at Holyhead: "I am a member of the Church of England—I am a decided member of the Church of England. I have been there all my life, and there, I trust, I shall die; but that will not prevent me from bearing an emphatic testimony to this—that the cause of justice, the cause of humanity, of mercy, of truth, of right for many millions of God's creatures in the east of Europe, has found its best, its most consistent, and almost its unanimous supporters in the Nonconformist Churches of the land." Surely a mind so penetrating and astute as that of Mr. Gladstone will be led to inquire why this should be so. Is it natural that men like the clergymen of the Church of England—men of education and refinement; men possessing the highest learning and culture of their times, the declared ministers of the Merciful and Just One; men who, in other directions, we know are charitable and humane, should, as a body, be found either dumb in the presence of flagrant sins of aggression and bloodshed, or actively abetting those who promote them? Is it natural that such men should be found so acting unless there were some pernicious cause at work to disturb their judgment and to sophisticate their conscience? And that disturbing element, I believe, consists in their connection with the State. (Cheers.) Very singular, certainly, are the curiosities of ecclesiastical morality. This day week I heard the Bishop of Lincoln say in the House of Lords that he had just come from the House of Convocation with a resolution, the ink upon which was scarcely dry, in which that body had denounced the Government Burials Bill as a measure that was doing dishonour to Almighty God. Well, during the three years that have been passing over our heads—years of aggressive and needless war, years when deceit and double dealing were in the ascendancy, during the time when tens of thousands of innocent human lives were sacrificed to a misplaced ambition, when slavery and bloodshed and desolation were being scattered in Afghanistan and Zululand, without any pretext of cause or justification,—this Convocation never uttered a word—(loud cheers)—not a syllable of condemnation or rebuke. But when an attempt is made to invade one of their exclusive ecclesiastical privileges, though it is one condemned as almost the whole judgment of the nation now affirms alike by common sense and Christian charity, then they fulminate anathemas against this little measure, as doing dishonour to Almighty God. Gentlemen, I am trespassing unduly on your time, and I will only say one word in conclusion. All these things, and many others to which I could point, indicate that things are tending in our direction. Influences, as I have said before, which we have not originated, but which spring from the arrangement and purposes of Divine providence, are all working in our direction. Then courage, friends, let us stand fast, let us honour by our courage the example of our dear friend here—Mr. Miall. I remember when he stood alone, and when many were frowning at him, but not for one moment did he swerve from his steady, constant, and determined pursuit of this great object. He has lived to see great results already achieved, and still better prospects opening before him; let us honour his example, and be firm and faithful unto death, that we may receive a crown of life. (Loud cheers.)

The Rev. F. TRESTRAIL (Chairman of the Baptist Union) in seconding the motion, said he presumed he had been asked to speak as having been present at the "Crown and Anchor" when the society was called into existence. It was hardly necessary, however, that he should say anything, except to call the attention of younger members to the last paragraph of the report. It was very easy to be a member of the Liberation Society now, but if they would study the history of the country during the last fifty years, they would have some idea of the ignoring, scorn, contempt, and persecution which the older members had to endure when they avowed their conviction that the society was a necessity, and that its principles were on the side of righteousness and truth. Those who, like himself, were now retiring from the scene, left to the younger members a priceless legacy, and he hoped they would feel the responsibility thrown upon them, and would pursue the objects of the society with even greater earnestness and zeal than their predecessors, because the hour of triumph was drawing so near. It was not likely that he would have the opportunity of taking part in another Triennial Conference, and he solemnly, as in the presence of Almighty God, urged those who were present to be fast and firm to the end. He had not expected to have the pleasure of again shaking by the hand his dear and honoured friend, Mr. Miall. It was an honour to any man to have stood by his side during his labours, and to have helped him, however feebly. If any man had a right to feel proud it was Mr. Miall as he looked upon the results of his life-long efforts. He hoped that the proceedings of that day would animate all their hearts, and stimulate them to work still more earnestly for the diffusion of the principles of liberty, righteousness, and justice all over the world. (Cheers.)



Mr. HUGH MASON, M.P., in supporting the resolution, said:—The report which the Executive Committee have presented to this Conference is full of encouragement, and the very sight of this great meeting is also encouraging. It seems to me to consist almost entirely of veterans in the great warfare for Religious Equality which has been going on for so many years. I confess I should have been glad if a larger portion of the Conference had consisted of younger men. Not that I should wish to see fewer of the fathers of the movement present; but since there is very much new ground to be occupied, one would like to see the juniors stepping forward to fill the vacant places which death and other causes make in the ranks of Liberationists. But I think we may derive encouragement from the fact that, though we have had to regret that for the past half-a-dozen years the government of this country has been in the hands of mischievous, unpatriotic, self-seeking men, yet our principles have not gone backward; and, therefore, we may reasonably hope, now that there has been so beneficent a change, that those principles will advance at a more rapid rate than they have done. (Hear, hear.) I cannot say that I feel disappointed with the progress of our movement during the past few years. I think a careful reading of the report which has been presented affords ample proof that we have been wisely led, that we have been liberally supported, and that we have done some good work; and if good work has been done when we have had in power a party full of manoeuvres of an obstructive character, rendering it (to quote the words which have been used in reference to another great question, in which I take a deep interest) somewhat difficult to do right, and easy to do wrong, then certainly we may be encouraged now that we have in office a party that will render it for us and for the promoters of other movements easy to do right, and difficult to do wrong. (Cheers.) One paragraph in this excellent report has forcibly struck me, and I cannot say that I entirely agree with it, that our principles during the late General Election have been kept in abeyance. Now, I, for one, do not think our principles were kept in abeyance. I think the success of those who were identified with our cause is a witness that those principles were not kept in the dark, but were put forward on every possible occasion, and with, in some parts of the country, distinguished ability and success. I am quite aware that there was before the constituencies at the last General Election one question which overshadowed all the rest, and that was the determination at all sacrifice to get rid of a Government which menaced the prosperity of the country, and the peace of the world. (Cheers.) But the question which concerns me anxiously at the present moment is what shall be our course now that we have got our friends in office? Now I have, I must confess, one motto beyond all others at this particular moment. I am sure nobody in this meeting will accuse me of being unwilling to take every chance of advancing our question, but one thing I am anxious about above all others, and it is this: that we shall, those of us, at all events, who are in the House of Commons, especially manifest a loyal confidence in the Government which is now in office. (Cheers.) A Government which has for its prominent members Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, (Cheers)—and which has some of its offices filled by men who have never upon our question spoken with bated breath, a Government consisting of elements such as those ought not to be imperilled, ought not to be in any degree weakened by any attempt on the part of ourselves to press forward our question at times when it may be inconvenient to our friends in office. (Hear, hear.) I am quite certain that as in the past so in the future our question will advance, perhaps slowly, but certainly substantially, and I am somewhat afraid that the impatience of some of our friends may place our question and our friends who are identified with it in the House of Commons in a position of embarrassment. Now I do not want to see this happen. It has happened in the past, and there is danger that it may happen again before very long,—that this excellent Government of ours shall, by a combination of the enemies on the Opposition benches with what I may call the radical wing of the Liberal party, be placed in a minority upon any question which does not involve the identification of ourselves with great and vital principles. (Hear, hear.) I am perfectly confident that we have only to be somewhat patient in our minds and politics and careful in our actions, and that as time goes on, and we continue to assemble from year to year on occasions like the present, we shall have cause for congratulation that we, at all events, connected with the Liberation party in Parliament have done nothing to weaken the hands of the Government. We have not only a thoroughly Liberal Government, but we have men in office of the highest conscientiousness, men of extremely sensitive minds, men who would deeply feel even an occasional departure from that path of support to which they themselves look. It would be a matter of regret if anything should occur in an unthinking way without due regard to the consequences which may ensue, to cause that high-minded Government (speaking especially of the men that I have named) to think, "Well, here we are, having done all in our power to promote the

principles of Religious Equality, having some of us been identified with those principles during the whole of our past life, and now we have an ungrateful body of supporters, what can we do under such circumstances?" I mention this with special reference to dangers which, I rather imagine, from my short experience in the House of Commons, are impending in connection with the action of the Liberationists and the Radical party there. Now, so far as I am concerned, it is my intention, without in the slightest degree turning my back on any occasion on my principles (for I prefer principles to men on every possible occasion), to do all that lies in my power to uphold the hands of the party in office—(cheers)—to show that in their time of unutterable difficulty they have the sympathy of the Nonconformist party in Parliament, and that they have not only sympathy, but that they have the warm-hearted and the loyal support of that party. (Cheers.) I know that there are some of our friends whose voices we like to hear, and who have had experience in Parliament, longer, of course, than I have had, who begin to fear that now we have got our friends in office our question will be set aside. I for one do think that the opportune work of the moment is first to free public engagements and public influences from that web of entanglement which has been woven by the late Ministry; and then, when the ground has been somewhat cleared, especially when war has been rendered impossible, when the great principles of peace have been placed out of danger and somewhat consolidated, then to seek for every possible opportunity to press our question upon Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues, and I have not the slightest doubt that the result will be a ready listening to what we have to say, if not a cordial acquiescence in what we venture to suggest. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS, M.P.: My reason for rising on the present occasion is to say a word or two upon some remarks which, perhaps, have been misapprehended, that fell from our friend, Mr. Hugh Mason, when he expressed his fear that the Radical section of the House of Commons would by joining the enemy embarrass the Government. Now, that is a warning to the Radical section, which I hope is not at all necessary—(cheers)—because I maintain that if one section of the political world has been made more willing than another to give up its political opinions for the sake of union, it is the Radical section; and I, who, I suppose, must be classed with that section, do not yield to any man in the desire, as Mr. Mason says, to uphold the hands of the party in office. But we must never cease to recall the condition under which our support is asked and given. It is the simple condition that the party we uphold shall be moving; and I venture to say for the Radical party—perhaps before some of the moderate party—that as long as any Government will give us certain measures, and be occupied in the passing of those measures which are for the common good, the Radicals will be the last to embarrass them. I mention this because I think that particular phrase of Mr. Mason's is liable to add to the embarrassments which are already existing—or which appear to exist in the House of Commons. We recognise that we cannot pass a lot of omnibuses at the same time through Temple Bar, or could not when it existed, and if the Government will say, "We have a lot of Land Bills, Burial Bills, and other Bills which we are anxious to pass," the Radical section will be the last to embarrass them in their work, in order to bring forward what some believe to be a bigger question than all. We are not higher authorities than the Government to say which of these great questions shall be taken first, we only ask that they shall be kept moving, for every Radical question, whether it relates to land or to anything else, is assisting every other Radical question, and we are not going to quarrel because our particular question is not taken up first. My own fear, I confess, is in the opposite direction; that the moderate party will so emasculate, or turn into a wrong direction, by amendments and so forth, those great measures which the Government are willing to pass, that the Radicals might fairly complain that in return for their forbearance and their good faith, they have not been treated by the moderate people in the same way as the Radicals are willing to treat them. Before I sit down I should like to make two suggestions—one is, that at the next Triennial Conference such a valuable report as this should be circulated before we meet in order that we may be able to digest it a little; another is that we should not rely for success on internal dissensions in the Church—for no matter how they quarrel amongst themselves when you get ten clergymen, and bring them face-to-face with the question of Disestablishment, you may be pretty certain what the vote of the majority on that question will be. We must rely on ourselves. (Hear, hear.) We must fight with our own soldiers. I am not going to credit a Churchman or clergyman with the disloyalty of departing from what is their primary duty—the upholding of the Established Church. Our duty is to make our principles known to every man, woman, and child in the land, so that when this question comes up, and in its turn becomes a practical question, the people who have been educated by this society up to the mark will have nothing to do but to vote. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. ILLINGWORTH, M.P.: I rise in the hope that I may be able to reassure our friend, Mr. Mason. I think he must have heard something of which the public and even those inside the House of Commons have no knowledge. He has said that he is a new member of the House, but I am certain that his acquaintance with the history of the House of Commons in the past, and of the combinations which have led to the overthrow of Governments, and the creation of confusion of the policy of the House, will tell him that Liberal Governments have not been overthrown by any *mallesances* between the Radicals and the Conservatives. Almost invariably Liberal Governments have fallen through from relying upon their opponents, and not taking into account what was fairly due to their advanced Liberal allies. As to the feeling that pervades our ranks I believe there is perfect unity amongst us. We showed at the last election, by moderating any demands that we might think ourselves entitled to make, that our supreme regard was to exchange the Ministry that has just gone out for a more honest one on general public questions; but at the same time we were convinced that our principles were advancing, and that by the fact of our moderation we were doing a good deal to arouse those principles in the minds of our less advanced friends and political colleagues. I want to point out this fact, which no politician should overlook when talking of Liberal Governments. I believe every one would endorse to the full what Mr. Mason has said of the Government as a whole, and perhaps of special members of the Government; but we must not forget there is a section of that Government which is not in the position that we are, and does not, and cannot look, at certain public questions from our standpoint, and it is only in proportion to our own fidelity to our convictions, and the steadfastness of the demands that we make upon the party, that that section of the Government and the governing class will be willing to advance along our line. It is due to the Government, as a whole, to say that we express here our gratitude to them for what they have done on the Burial Question. We thank them for the promptitude with which they have dealt with the question, and with regard to men like Lord Selborne, who have found some difficulty in making up their minds to take hold of the question at the right end, we thank them for the courage and the manliness with which they have admitted that there is only one settlement possible, and for the determination they have shown that that settlement shall be fairly and loyally carried out. (Cheers.) I think we are all agreed that if the Government does carry out a series of first-class reforms upon the general lines of Liberal policy, there is no possibility of any difficulty coming from the Liberation party. We expect, unless some unforeseen misfortune should come over our country, and over Europe, that this Parliament will be able to settle many pressing questions upon which the Liberal party is aggrieved; and it is essential for the future prosperity of the party, for its activity and success, that the next great question that lies in our path, which is Scotch Disestablishment, should be recognised by all our leaders, and then it will be as easy at the next election, as it was at the last, for union to prevail throughout the ranks, and for the Liberationists to do over again that which notoriously they did at the last election—that is, to carry back the Liberal party to power. (Cheers.)

Rev. J. PAGE HORRS (Leicester) said he was entirely in sympathy with the Liberation Society; but he desired to call attention to a matter of vital importance in that part of the report which alluded to the Burials Bill. He wished to express his great satisfaction with the remarkable liberality of the committee in taking exception to the clauses of the Bill providing that burials should be Christian and religious. It seemed an ungracious thing to congratulate themselves for wanting to strike out the word Christian or religious, but politicians would understand what they meant. (Hear, hear.) He regarded it as a signal illustration of the breadth and liberality of the society and the committee that it should take up the ground it had assumed, and say that the prohibition of any address not of a religious character was not in harmony with the principle affirmed by the Lord Chancellor on his introduction of the Bill, that the civil right of burial should not be fettered by ecclesiastical conditions. But he regretted the statement in the third resolution passed by the committee, "They regret that the Bill does not abolish all legal distinctions between consecrated and unconsecrated ground and chapels in parochial cemeteries, and thereby relieve burial boards from obligations which, when the Bill has become law, will be without practical utility." That looked as if they desired a prohibition of consecrated ground. ("No, no.") He knew they did not desire that, and therefore he wished to have the matter made clear. There might be some occult meaning in the word "legal," but it would seem as if they desired that there should be no consecrated ground and consecrated chapels, because the resolution said the boards would be relieved from obligations which would be without any practical utility. Would consecrated ground be without any practical utility if the Bill

became law? It would not. Churchmen felt that they could not conscientiously inter their dead in any other than consecrated ground, and the utility of the existence of consecrated ground was that the feelings and religious wishes of a large section of persons were met by it. All that they had as Nonconformists a right to ask was that those who had consecrated ground should pay for it, but he objected to anything like an appearance of over-riding other people's religious convictions.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Burials Question would be discussed at the evening meeting.

Mr. J. CARVELL WILLIAMS said he thought if Mr. Hopps had waited till the evening he would have found it unnecessary to deliver the speech he had just made. The word "legal" governed the first portion of the resolution, and it was only the legal distinctions between consecrated and unconsecrated ground that were objected to. With regard to the objection that they desired to disprove consecration, by declaring that there would be no practical utility in it if the Bill were passed, he begged to call Mr. Hopps's attention to the fact that it was the obligations on the burial boards which were said to be of no practical utility.

The motion was then put and carried.

#### THE GENERAL ELECTION.

Mr. SCHNADHORST, of Birmingham, moved the following resolution on this subject:

The Conference regards with thankfulness the issue of the recent General Election; which, besides placing in Parliament sixteen members of the Society's Executive Committee, has resulted in the return to the House of Commons of a larger number of members in favour of the principle of Disestablishment than have sat in any previous Parliament. The Conference re-mits to the Executive Committee about to be appointed the careful consideration of the society's future parliamentary policy, and is confident that it will be energetically and steadily supported by the society's friends.

He said that Birmingham claimed to have sent, for ten years, at least, an undivided representation of Disestablishment to the House of Commons, and it had not only at the last election returned three Disestablishment members to the House, but it had two of those members in the Cabinet—(cheers)—and wherever those gentlemen were, they would be faithful to the principles which for years they had honestly advocated. He believed that the caucus had had something to do with the result on which they were congratulating themselves, and that institution, if honestly carried out, meant that the party itself should express its views in regard to the selection of candidates. Almost for the first time in many of the constituencies, they had at the last election found the Radical and Nonconformist section of the party in a position to insist that at least one member, if there were two, should be pledged to Disestablishment. The more completely they could get the principle recognised that the party should govern itself, the more numerous would be the Disestablishment members returned. An enormous majority of the householders in the boroughs, certainly in all the great towns, were in favour of Disestablishment, and that feeling ought to be completely reflected in the House of Commons. The fact referred to in the resolution was a remarkable one—that, although they had not in any constituency unduly pressed the principle of Disestablishment, a great increase had taken place in the return of Disestablishment members; and that of the sixteen referred to as members of the executive, ten had been returned for the first time. That might be taken as indicating a growth of public sentiment in favour of their principles; and the officers of the society might fairly claim that the result was largely due to what they had so long and energetically carried forward. With regard to the question of Parliamentary policy, he thought it was a matter for very grave consideration whether, in the present condition of affairs in the House of Commons, it would be wise to raise the question of Disestablishment at present; and certainly he thought it would be unwise to adopt the policy of insisting upon a division with reference to it year after year. It would be better, if at all, to take the opinion of the House once for all in a Parliament like the present. Their work was still outside the House of Commons, and an opportunity would soon be forthcoming. The House could scarcely be dissolved until the suffrage had been given to the householders of the counties, who entertained pretty much the same political opinions as the householders in the towns. If they were not satisfied of that, it was their duty to set to work among the county constituencies. With regard to the counties round about Birmingham, the Liberal party had resolved to institute a political propaganda which should reach every village. The committee of 600 (which had been enlarged to 800) would divide themselves into groups, and spend their Saturday afternoons in preaching Liberal principles in the villages. Very much had been done in that way by the representatives of the Liberation Society, and he invited them to unite their forces with the general Liberal forces in that respect wherever union was desired, so that the Liberal platform might also be the Disestablishment platform. If they would work energetically on that line for the next two or three years,



when the county householders received the franchise, they would know how to exercise it wisely. (Cheers.)

The Rev. S. PEARSON, M.A., of Liverpool, in seconding the resolution, said that whereas Mr. Schnadhorst had come from the brightest part of the country, he was a citizen of Liverpool, which was the darkest part of the country in reference to the great question which they were met to promote. Nevertheless, he was happy to inform the members of the Conference that even their Liberal principles were progressing, and with the help of their good bishop, he hoped they would progress still further. (Laughter.) They had done something towards the overthrow of the late Government, inasmuch as their contest, and the one immediately succeeding at Southwark, formed the trap which led the Conservative Government to appeal to the country, and he therefore thought they were under some debt of obligation to the city of Liverpool. There was one remarkable omission in their contest, and he imagined in many of the contests throughout the country, that their Liberal candidate did not say much about Disestablishment; he was very much like the parrot which would not speak, but was a rare one to think. (Laughter.) The fact was, Liberal candidates did not find it necessary to speak on the subject, because the Conservative members were always speaking upon it. In his boyhood the bogey which frightened them in their nurseries was Buonaparte; but after awhile they began to feel there was no such man after all. The bogey by which the children of the Liberal party were now frightened was Disestablishment; but by-and-by they would find there was no great cause of terror, even in that much-feared name. Another reason why they did not speak very much about Disestablishment was that they had a larger scheme of Disestablishment to carry out—they had to disestablish what had been truly called one of the worst ministries that had ever inflicted itself upon the country. They had also to consider the cause of Liberation as it affected the down-trodden nationalities in the East. Considering that there were even greater questions than the one with regard to which they were then met, they thought it was wise to be somewhat reticent concerning it. Mr. Mason had spoken with all the caution and prudence that befitted a member of a Parliament, who when he came into the position of responsibility felt that he had to speak with somewhat bated breath. He (Mr. Pearson) spoke from a different standpoint. He thought it was the duty of constituencies to make themselves as disagreeable as they possibly could to members of Parliament—(laughter)—and he hoped that they would give them no rest by their continual appeals on the subject of Disestablishment. If they had returned so large a number of members of Parliament pledged to their principles when they were reticent on the subject, what might they not expect when the question was brought prominently before the constituencies? There would come a time when there would be no Eastern Question to settle, when there would be no Conservative blunders to form the theme of Liberal speeches; and then he hoped they would be able to return a far larger number of members pledged to the principles of the society. He hoped the Liberation Society would be true to the Liberal party. In the constitution which was to be placed before them immediately, he observed that they were to be asked to agree to work apart from party and sectional lines, and while he supposed they would all agree to that, he hoped they would also agree to the fact that they belonged to the Liberal party, and that the success of the Liberal party was bound up with the success of the society and its principles. There could be no success to their principles apart from the unity of the Liberal party; it would be found that that unity had never been broken by the left wing; it had sometimes been broken by the moderates, or the right wing; but the left wing had always been true to the great principles of justice and equality which lay at the foundation of the party. They should endeavour to provoke throughout the country a feeling of enthusiasm for the party if it was to maintain its present position, and he knew no other question so capable of evoking enthusiasm as the question of Disestablishment. The question of the lowering of the franchise and the redistribution of seats was virtually settled. He did not suppose that any great fervour could be awakened on behalf of a new Water Bill for London—(laughter)—and he did not know on what question large and enthusiastic meetings could be gathered like the question they were considering. It was necessary for them to sow the seed throughout the constituencies of the country, and in due time they would reap a glorious harvest. (Cheers.)

The chair was here vacated by Mr. Lee, and was occupied during the remainder of the sitting by Mr. Ellington.

The Hon. E. LYULPH STANLEY, M.P., said they were met as Liberatorists, and not merely as members of the Liberal party. Although many members were Liberatorists first and members of the Liberal party afterwards, he wished to say that it was because he was a member of the Liberal party in the widest sense of the term, that he was necessarily by implication, along with other things, a Liberatorist. In the various advances of the Liberal party they might look upon questions

as they bore upon religious equality. As a ship when sailing against the wind was forced to make tacks, and even seem to sail from the point which it sought to gain, so the questions of household suffrage in the counties, redistribution, and the like, were good for their own sake; but they interested them as Liberatorists, because they believed that through a more popular and equal system of representation, they could bring a more popular force to bear upon the Government and Parliament, to accomplish their special object. While recognising in the fullest degree the great merit and the great conscientiousness and earnestness of the present Prime Minister and many members of the Government, they should always remember that there was some use in having members of the Liberal party who were more keenly attached, if possible, to their principles than to the party, and who would assert them at times when moderate men, or men on the other side, might postpone their consideration. It was desirable that they should maintain their attitude of friendly and independent support, and show that they were always keeping their eye fixed upon their great principles, even though in trying to accomplish them they were obliged sometimes to tack. There was an important point which he hoped the Executive Committee would seriously consider. Three years ago a most important paper of suggestions for Disestablishment (practically a Bill which was drafted) was laid before the Conference, and by that Conference remitted to the society at large throughout the country for their careful consideration. The very great stress of large national questions had prevented that Bill and those suggestions from having the full consideration and discussion which were desirable, before the society, as a whole, could be called upon finally to ratify and accept them. They might hope that the present Parliament would last over three years, though probably it would not last anything like so long as its predecessor. There might be another Triennial Conference of the society before the dissolution of Parliament, and he hoped that before that time the question would be well discussed and ventilated. He did not imagine that the present Parliament, or perhaps even the next, was going to disestablish the Church of England; but when a great measure for the redistribution of seats and the enfranchisement of the agricultural population was passed, the constituencies ought to know who were the thorough friends of Religious Equality and who were not, and, therefore, he thought that a division on the subject should be taken before Parliament was dissolved. By that time another Conference might have assembled, and the friends throughout the country would have carefully considered the question. Of course the time had not come for the present Conference to pass any opinion on the suggestions and on the Bill to which he referred; but he would urge on the executive the necessity of taking up the question seriously and thoughtfully with a view to the education of the constituencies, and of many members of the society itself; and he hoped they would not forget the main object of the most emphatic assertion of Religious Equality was the ultimate disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England. (Cheers.)

Mr. C. H. JAMES, M.P., said that, at all events, Mr. Merthyr had done his duty, for his friend and colleague, Mr. Richard, was at one end of the table, and he (Mr. James) was at the other. They were in a peculiar position in Wales, about four-fifths of the people being Nonconformists. It was stated by Hallam that a religious establishment should only be kept up by the people and for the people. The people in Wales built their own chapels and paid their own ministers, and they did not want the outside help of other people. He thought that in regard to the question of Disestablishment, Wales might be taken by itself. The reasons that applied to Ireland applied with still stronger force to Wales. They were different in race and language; the people had a nationality of their own, and it was a great pity they had not a Church of their own. At any rate, in any scheme of Disestablishment they might be tacked on to Scotland. (Laughter.) They had two or three little bishoprics in Wales, and if they were disestablished the House of Lords would be none the worse. If there was any place that deserved Disestablishment it was Wales—poor little Wales—and he asked for it as a matter of simple justice.

Mr. WYLES (Coventry) said he desired to emphasize the recommendation of Mr. E. L. Stanley with reference to the distribution of information among the constituencies before the next dissolution. He presumed that they were none of them inclined to carry out the work of Disestablishment as it was carried out in Ireland; and it was well that the country should be informed as to what the work was and how it was to be done.

The motion was then put and carried unanimously.

#### THE CONSTITUTION OF THE SOCIETY.

Mr. Alderman BOOTH (Manchester) moved, That the constitution as now revised be adopted as the constitution of the society for the next three years.

He rejoiced to hear the objects of the society so well set forth as they had been, and cordially supported the suggestion as to the

distribution of the pamphlet referred to throughout the length and breadth of the land. The new Parliament could come to the subject untrammelled, and he hoped it would take it in hand.

Mr. PIDDUCK (Hanley) seconded the motion. Mr. FORDHAM recommended the holding of Disestablishment meetings in different parts of the kingdom. It was, he said, always a matter of the greatest surprise to him that any Liberals could be found who were not advocates of Disestablishment.

The Rev. J. PAOR HOPPS objected to the statement in the objects of the society that it was desired to secularise national "property," and suggested the substitution of the word "funds." Property he said, included buildings, and he did not suppose it was desired to apply the churches of the land to secular uses, but that was the impression conveyed by the words employed.

The CHAIRMAN said Mr. Hopps would find the question satisfactorily dealt with in the "Practical suggestions" referred to by Mr. Stanley. The effect of the proposal amendment would be that all the churches would be handed over not to the parishioners, but to one sect, which he presumed was not what was contemplated or desired.

The amendment of Mr. Hopps not finding a seconder, fell to the ground, and the resolution was put and carried.

The Conference then adjourned.

#### 2 SECOND SITTING.

The Conference resumed its sitting in the evening in the same Hall.

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS announced that Mr. J. Dick Peddie, M.P., who had been advertised to preside, was anxious to hear the statement of Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons, and had earnestly begged to be excused attendance; consequently it was proposed that the chair should be occupied by Mr. James Stewart, of Glasgow, a member of the Scottish Executive Committee. (Hear, hear.)

On the proposition being seconded, and put to the meeting, and approved, Mr. James Stewart took the chair.

#### DISESTABLISHMENT IN SCOTLAND

The CHAIRMAN said he accepted with pride the honour imposed on him, although he did so with very great trepidation, for it was not an easy matter at an hour's notice to address so important a meeting on so important an occasion as this. He would, however, say a few words in regard to the position of the Scottish Church Disestablishment question at the present moment in Scotland. The report stated very truly that the cause of Disestablishment in Scotland had, during the past three years, made unchecked and rapid progress. All who knew the state of the question in Scotland, whether they lived on that or this side of the Border, must have noticed that in Scotland the question of Disestablishment was ripe for solution. Various things had occurred tending to hasten the desire for a consummation. They had, some few years ago, a Patronage Act passed, the object of which was to "dish" the Dissenters of Scotland, and especially the Free Church section, and add largely to the Established Church. The result of that Act, however, had had just a contrary effect. Whatever the object of the measure, it had irritated and harassed the members of the Established Church in the election of their ministers, and had tended to advance the cause which this society so earnestly advocated. Then, since the last Conference they had had in Scotland a visit from Lord Hartington; and the utterances which the noble lord made had a startling effect, not only in Scotland, but on all who had watched the Disestablishment question; and the encouragement given at that time by him had not yet subsided. One of the immediate results of his words uttered at Edinburgh was a conference at Glasgow, between Lord Hartington and one of the most influential assemblies of Scotchmen that ever appeared before a leading member of the House of Commons. Then, in the House of Commons itself, there had been discussions which had tended to accelerate the movement—at any rate in Scotland. Two sessions ago there were resolutions before the House having the object of preventing Disestablishment; but the effect of the whole of the discussions was to advance very materially the question of Disestablishment, and to help it on to the stage of very ripening progress which it had now reached. But the question more prominently before this meeting was the point at which the movement had arrived in Scotland now? They had had recently more than one mode of testing the length to which they had reached. They had in May their annual meetings of the great Church sections in Scotland—and at the Synods and Assemblies of those churches the most emphatic declarations and resolutions were unanimously carried. The Synod of the United Presbyterian Church (which represented the Old Dissenters) were unanimously in favour of pushing the question to an immediate settlement. Also in the Assembly of the Free Church a resolution of a very strong and decided character was carried, urging the prosecution of the question to a prompt and immediate

solution; and besides that they went a step further, and indicated what they thought should be done with the property let loose when the Church is disestablished. Then they had also the recent General Election. Everyone knew how the Tory party in that election attained to the perfect number of seven. (Laughter.) That number was sent up to represent the Tory and Church party in Scotland—for the Tory and Church party during the election went hand in hand. The Dissenters in Scotland, as well as in England, for the most part belonged to the Liberal party. (Applause.) The question arose in the election whether the country should be governed by a corrupt, wicked, and outrageous Tory Government, or whether it should be governed by a Liberal policy and a Liberal party, and in the face of that question the Dissenters of Scotland decided that they would not raise the Church question during the election. Neither in any case did they raise the question, but it was raised for them—(Hear, hear)—because the Tory party felt that they had no strong argument to urge why any Scotchman should vote for a Tory candidate except on the Church question, and so it happened that the Tories and the Church handed themselves together, and endeavoured to put forward the bugbear of Disestablishment to secure, if possible, the return of the Tory candidates; but it was a great failure. (Applause.) He need not say how, in the county of Midlothian, where the question was raised—(cheers)—they carried triumphantly the Premier of the country. (Renewed applause.) A great deal had been said about an utterance of Mr. Gladstone's—at Dalkeith, he believed—to the effect that before the Church of Scotland should be disestablished it should have a fair trial. What that meant, he (the Chairman) would not take upon himself to say; but a very prominent leader of the Established Church had taken on himself, in *Fraser's Magazine*, to give an exposition of it. That gentleman, who was looked up to as a most thorough Liberal leader of the Church party, interpreted the words to mean that it was decided that the Church of Scotland shall not be disestablished by any higgling mode. As if the Liberation Society, either in England or Scotland, ever sought to hide its light under a bushel, or sought to do good by stealth. Whatever they advocated, whether Disestablishment in Scotland or England, they always did it openly—(hear, hear)—and never attempted to smuggle anything through Parliament; and if they should attempt it they knew it could not be done. But what was a "fair trial"? Why, the Church of Scotland had been tried for the last 300 years, and in every emergency it had failed. (Hear, hear.) The endowments of the Church of Scotland had been to it—he was going to say a curse—but at any rate a hindrance to its true prosperity. The Church had failed in everything except in the advocacy of its own course, its own endowments—(hear, hear)—its own privileges, and its prestige. Not so long ago the Church, during the Corn Law agitation, petitioned Parliament almost unanimously, not to take the tax off the food of the people, because the effect might be to lower their stipends. The Church had been tried on other occasions, but it had always proved itself to be a failure. Well, then, the present position to which they had got in Scotland was one of great encouragement. About three years ago there was formed in Scotland a Scottish Council, having an executive, with a chairman and office-bearers, to carry on this work; and that had proved a wise and good mode of action, for it had done great good in Scotland, and was a sort of guarantee for wisdom in the future equalising the moderation of the past. The Council had acted with great prudence and caution, and had never given any occasion to their opponents to say that they were extreme men. The work he hoped would be effectively carried on in their hands. There was, however, one little difficulty, that in some of the recent election contests the Liberal candidates left the Disestablishment question alone on the tacit understanding that they would not move in it in the present Parliament. That understanding might tie up the tongues of some of the Scottish members of Parliament; but it need not tie up any one who did not put "M.P." to his name—(Hear, hear)—and thus those who were free ought to be, perhaps, all the more "instant in season and," if it were wise, "out of season" in letting everyone know that the Dissenters in Scotland were determined that the Church of Scotland should be forthwith disestablished and disendowed. (Hear, hear.) There was more than one reason for advocating this. They had in Scotland, as in England, ecclesiastical disunion. There were many good and godly men who thought that this question of Disestablishment stood in the way of hearty co-operation in useful Christian and godly work; but on the other hand, he had heard of some "weak-kneed" Liberals who said, "Let us hold this in abeyance for the sake of God's work." He believed it was impossible to get Churchmen to unite and co-operate with them so long as State connection and State endowment existed. Remove that and they would remove all barriers so far as ecclesiastical union was concerned. Then as to political disunion, there was only this Church question which divided the Liberal party as a body in Scotland. There-



fore, for the sake of the religious view, for the sake of Liberal union, for the sake of God's work in Scotland, and all over the world, he would have God's Church set free from every trammel. The time was coming when they would have free speech and action and worship, such as they never could have as long as they were only "tolerated"—a word that never ought to have been on the English statute book. (Applause.)

The Rev. ALEXANDER OLIVER, of Glasgow, moved:—

The Conference views with special satisfaction the results of the elections in Scotland with reference to the Disestablishment of the Church in that country. The Conference is further glad to observe indications that, so far from being willing to allow the question to remain in abeyance until the occurrence of another election, the Scottish advocates of Disestablishment will not relax their exertions to bring the question to a decisive issue at the earliest practical period, and trusts that they will have the hearty co-operation the friends of religious equality in other parts of the kingdom.

It was hardly necessary, he said, to prove the statement in the resolution that they had made progress in Scotland. They had turned out a great many Tories, and sent up a large and more thorough-going contingent of Liberals than had been returned to Parliament before. (Applause.) The resolution expressed a hope that they would not relax the agitation. They did not mean to do that, and he trusted that the forthcoming year would give abundance of evidence that the hope expressed in the resolution would be realised. If he was asked the state of the Disestablishment question in Scotland, his answer would be that they were ripe for it; but whether the Government was ripe for touching it was another question. That the people of Scotland were ripe for it was a point he desired to make good. As they had been unable to get the Church removed, they had done the next best thing, and removed themselves. (Applause.) The majority of the Scotch people had left the kirk, and had not the slightest intention of going back to it. The owners of the house had departed from it and built a new one; and that was the best evidence that it was time to pull down the old one. (Laughter.) One or two facts bearing on the positions they had taken up, and their ripeness would be interesting. Four years ago they had a religious census taken in the South and South-West of Scotland, not by the Government, but through the enterprise of a daily newspaper at Glasgow. The area comprised one-third of the entire population of Scotland, and was an area in which the Church of Scotland was strong, but the result of the census was that only one-third of the people attended the Established Kirk, whilst two-thirds were found in the United Presbyterian and the Free Churches. When they calculated the population who belonged to the Independents, the Baptists, the Roman Catholics, and those who were non-church-going, he believed it would be found that 75 per cent. of the population were outside the pale of the Kirk, and were ripe for the Disestablishment of the Church. (Hear, hear.) Among the Grampians in Sutherland, Ross, and Caithness he believed not more than 14 per cent. of the population attended the Kirk, and if they calculated adherents they would only have 3 per cent. The Church of Scotland was practically disestablished in the Highlands, for the population, almost to a man, had left it, yet it was kept as a "scarecrow," and was called a "national testimony to religion." (Laughter.) Another way of looking at the question was to see how public opinion regarded it. They found the moderator of the General Assembly saying that the Church of Scotland belonged to no political party, but was a national institution; whereas, in fact, the Church of Scotland was very little else than a Tory camp. The ministers of the Kirk voted for the Tories as a rule. There were a few Liberals among them; but their Liberalism might be considerably improved, especially at St. Andrew's. It was said the question of Disestablishment was not made a test question with Liberal candidates; but he was not quite clear about that. It was said Dissenters decided not to raise that issue; but he never assented to that position—in truth, was never asked to do so. He thought that in Glasgow, if the Liberal candidates had not been thoroughgoing men, they would not have been elected. At any rate, the vast majority of the Scotch Liberal members had openly pronounced in favour of Disestablishment, and he was not aware that any one of them would vote against it. If they wanted another test of public opinion, let them refer to the Church synods. The Presbyterian Synod, representing half-a-million of the population, had year after year denounced the Establishment as a gross injustice that ought not to continue; and the Free Church Assembly had taken up a clear and decided position in favour of Disestablishment. The testimony of those two bodies was clear and decided as to the ripeness of the country for those important changes. And even in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland there were very significant words uttered, as if they thought it was time to be thinking of setting their house in order; and the moderator himself spoke as if he wanted the Disestablishment question to be settled, for he desired statesmen to arise who would have

the courage of their convictions. That was exactly what the people of Scotland wanted, and what the Free Churches were calling for. Could there be any better evidence that the country was ripe for the end? It only then remained to press on the matter on those who had been put into power. It was said they must not embarrass the Liberal party. Certainly not; but if they stood by the Liberal party, he hoped the Liberal party would stand by them—(Applause)—and do them justice. They asked nothing else; but they would not be contented till they got this simple justice for Scotland.

Mr. JOHN TEMPLETON (London) seconded the resolution, and observed that while seeking the object they had in view in Scotland, the society had been obliged to be very delicate in approaching Scotchmen and trying to coax them to take this question up for themselves and make it a question of practical politics. It was, therefore, a matter of congratulation that Scotchmen had themselves moved in the matter, and with such effect as had been stated. The ripening seemed to have gone on wonderfully since the passing of the Patronage Act, which must have stung Scotchmen into a deeper sense of the injustice of continuing the Establishment. If Scotland were polled, it appeared clear that a substantial majority would be in favour of Disestablishment. The advantage of being free was shown by the magnificent illustration of the power of the voluntary principle in the case of the Free Churches of Scotland. There was now no longer an Established Church wanted to reach the obscurest parts of the Highlands, as that was already done by the Free Churches. As to the ripeness of public opinion, it was shown in the fact that although Disestablishment was not a test question at the elections, all the members returned, if not pledged to it, would, at any rate not vote against it. Though there was no desire that the question should be prematurely pressed, the resolution pledged them to use exertions to bring the matter to an issue at the earliest practical period, and he felt sure all would agree that if the question was not pressed in the present Session, it ought to be brought prominently before the attention of the House of Commons during some early Session. (Hear, hear.) There was great encouragement to do this, for help came from quarters where least expected. It was not impossible that a Scotch Archbishop of Canterbury who could support the Government Burials Bill might also see his way to give his support to a measure for disestablishing the Scotch Church. Let them not, then, relax their efforts, but support the Scotch people, and then the Scotch would give their support when required South of the Tweed.

The Rev. Dr. HUTTON (Paisley), in seconding the resolution, said it was important that Scotland and England should understand each other and co-operate together, for they had but one interest in a great cause, and whether they began in England or Scotland, no matter. But as the battle was expected to commence in Scotland, Englishmen should make Scotland the object of their great attention—at least, until the scene changed. They must therefore, in the words of a great authority, "Consolidate co-operation." (Applause and laughter.) The Church of Scotland, like the Church of England, was founded on statute law, and the laws of the Scotch Church were made in Parliament. Was that, he asked, "Scriptural freedom?" They had liberty only within the fetters of the statute. Reference had been made during the Conference to the Lord High Commissioner. That great functionary was always a nobleman—as good a nobleman as could be got for the money and the honour—(laughter)—who came to Edinburgh in the name of the Queen, and made a procession as much as possible like the Lord Mayor's show in London—(laughter)—after which he opened the Assembly. He practically opened the door to the Assembly, and, after the sittings, showed all the members out and locked the door upon them; for he declared at the close, "In the name of the Queen I declare the General Assembly to be closed, and appoint Thursday, the 19th day of May, 1881, for its reassembling." There was a Church for them, with its glorious liberties! (Laughter.) The Lord High Commissioner was a sagacious man, and in his address said: "You are aware of the peculiar circumstances under which I now address you; and that it is a farewell and, probably, a final farewell." Then he presented the Assembly with a clock, and observed that they had nothing within the walls to "mark the flight of time." That was really the state of the Church; they were behind the age, and did not know the time of day. (Much laughter.) The Lord High Commissioner admitted that the Patronage Act which he supported had been a failure. That was an important concession to make; no legislation of any kind could now bring back those who had gone outside the Scotch Church, and who were enjoying the liberty of Christ without any interruption from the civil power. The Lord High Commissioner was, perhaps, a little "out of sorts" when, in his closing sentences, he warned the members "carefully to avoid those whose religious shibboleth was a flimsy cloak to conceal a political programme, and their disguise to obtain those temporal advantages at present beyond their reach." (Cries of "Oh!") Very handsome words, were they not, to

issue from the lips of a man representing the Majesty of Great Britain, and Her Gracious Majesty the Queen? (Applause.) Now, what about the Liberal party? Only eight Conservatives had been returned out of 60 Scotch members. All the rest were ready to follow the Liberal leaders at any time in the work of Disestablishment. Let not any one after that say that the Scotch members were not ripe for Disestablishment. The vast majority were in favour of it, and the rest would accept the decision of the Scotch people. He regretted that the expression had gone abroad that nothing could be done in the present Parliament. He was certainly of opinion that no such engagement was binding on the Scottish conscience or the Scottish honour, and that the Scotch people were free to use any means that might be suitable to conduct this agitation to an early issue. (Hear, hear.) They could not allow a great agitation like this to be at the mercy of personal feeling and personal circumstances. As to embarrassing the Government, there need be no fear of that when at its head was one of the noblest men that ever lived. (Cheers.) If there was much for the Government to do already, and if matters were as bad as the Augean stable, they must remember that they had a Hercules to clean it out. (Cheers.) If they had now a Liberalism that could grasp political questions, they must have also a Liberalism that would embrace ecclesiastical questions as well. They must give the Government a little pressure, for the country was manifestly ripe for the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. They were told it was a Scotch question, but it was an English question as well, because the principle in both cases was the same, and in both countries the Established Church system was corrupt, unscriptural, and unjust, and ought to be abolished. (Cheers.)

The Rev. W. GRAHAM (Dunfermline) also supported the resolution, and on the question of ripeness, related how even a Free Church minister, who had been an opponent of Disestablishment all his life, had come to the conclusion now that Disestablishment must take place. In another instance "a rabid Tory," a person of considerable position, had also come to the same conclusion since the General Election. It only remained to educate the people to the same opinion, and the work would then be soon accomplished.

#### THE GOVERNMENT BURIALS BILL.

Mr. J. CARVELL WILLIAMS then gave an exposition of the Government Burials Bill. He said it was very possible that the announcement of this might have induced a feeling of weariness in the minds of some of the members, and it was more likely that the details he was going to present might increase rather than diminish that feeling. (Cries of "No, no.") All he could say to console them under the infliction was that they would probably not be troubled with this question at many more of the Triennial Conferences. He would not say that they might not hear something about it at the next, because he believed by that time they would be able to rejoice over the complete settlement of the question. (Applause.) He had been contrasting their position in regard to this question in the year 1880 with that in which it stood in the year 1870. There had been elected, not very long before, a new Parliament, and one in which the Liberals were in overwhelming strength; for it was the Parliament which abolished the Irish Church Establishment. It was at the beginning of that Parliament that Mr. Osborne Morgan first made his appearance as their leader in regard to this question, and they had every reason to congratulate themselves on their choice. (Applause.) Mr. Osborne Morgan then introduced the first of the series of measures which had been associated with his name, and the second reading of that Bill was carried by the large majority of 111. But, unfortunately, it then practically came into the hands of the Government, and the Home Secretary, instead of furnishing facilities for carrying it through its remaining stages, moved that it should be referred to a Select Committee; and that step was fatal. The Bill came out of committee, but maimed and mutilated; the mutilation being the action of those who should have been its friends. Notwithstanding that Mr. Morgan reluctantly accepted the restrictions, the Opposition were in no degree propitiated. The resistance was continued, the unwillingness of the Government to assist in the passing of the Bill remained, and the consequence was that although supported by large majorities on the second reading, it was never able to get a point beyond, because of the resistance of a pertinacious minority. He would not say it was in the power of the then Liberal Government to have settled the question, because it might be that the House of Lords had not then reached the point of liberality which it had since done; but the Government might have had the credit of passing it through the House of Commons. Then came the General Election of 1874, which dispersed the Liberal majority, and of course the majority in favour of the Bill was gone. But then this remarkable circumstance occurred more than once, that whereas the Tory majority ranged on various occasions from 70 up to 120, they were unable ever to defeat this Burials Bill by more than a small majority. When the General Election came

they witnessed absolute unanimity amongst the Liberal candidates. That being the case, and having regard to the fact that the existence of this Government was very largely the effect of earnest Nonconformist support, it was not surprising that this Liberal Administration should have felt it a duty, not merely to deal with this question, but to do so at the earliest possible period. He appreciated their promptitude, though he was not quite sure that a little more consideration might not have led them to produce a better measure. Now there were three courses which the Government might have taken in dealing with this question. One was to pass quickly Mr. Osborne Morgan's Bill, but with the knowledge at the same time that that Bill would no longer suffice to dispose of the question; so that if it had been passed it must have been followed by the demand for a wider measure. Then it was open to them to pass the Bill, widening its provisions as Mr. Osborne Morgan would have done if he had had the opportunity of bringing in the measure himself; for he had come to the conclusion that it was necessary to apply the principles of the Burials Bill to parochial cemeteries as well as to churchyards. The third course might have been to defer all legislation on the subject, in order that next session they might bring in a Consolidation Bill, which would have settled in a general way the whole of these vexed questions. But there was a fourth course which occurred to the Government, and which they had adopted. They had brought in a Bill which adopted that of Mr. Osborne Morgan, at the same time inserting certain restrictions. They had also applied the principle of the Bill to parochial cemeteries, but so incompletely, that if the Bill passed in its present form, there would require to be further legislation on the question. They had also made this a measure one not simply for relieving Nonconformists, but for relieving the clergy of some of the burdens which rested on them, and that in a somewhat equivocal fashion. There were three aspects in which the Bill could be regarded, and he might as well give some information as to the amendments the Lord Chancellor would propose on Tuesday. The first aspect, and that which attracted their attention most was the mode in which it dealt with Nonconformists. On notice being given to the incumbent that the service of the Church of England would not be required, it would be possible to arrange for the attendance of some one else to conduct a service of another kind. The Lord Chancellor proposed to insert a condition that if the day named for the funeral should be Sunday, Good Friday, or Christmas Day, the funeral service should be on the following day. There might be two opinions as to the expediency or otherwise of abolishing funerals on those days; but if there were to be restriction in the matter, it ought to be restriction all round, and if a Sunday service was to be denied to the Nonconformists, it should be denied to the members of the Church of England. (Applause.) No doubt the plea urged in support of this would be that it was undesirable that Nonconformist burial services should take place near to the services being held by the Church. The Bill already made provision that if the time named was near a service the incumbent should have power to alter it, and that appeared to him to be quite sufficient, except in those cases where there were services going on in the churches all day long. (Laughter.) He apprehended that Nonconformists would resent the suggestion implied in all these proposals, that if the funeral party came into the churchyard when there happened to be any members of the Church present, a conflict would certainly take place. They thought their conduct heretofore in regard to the burial of the dead ought to place them above all these suspicions, and that the Legislature had as much right to trust them as any other body. (Applause.) Then there were other restrictions which were of much more importance. The sixth clause of the Bill said that services must be Christian, as well as orderly. The Lord Chancellor had been taunted with the impossibility of defining what was Christian, but in his speech he had put a broad interpretation on the word, and he now proposed to insert words to the following effect to make the meaning more plain—that "the word 'Christian' in this section shall include every religious service used by any Church, denomination, or person professing to be Christian." (Laughter.) Any restriction of this kind was quite inconsistent with the principle laid down by the Lord Chancellor himself; he having affirmed that the civil right of burial ought not to be fettered by any ecclesiastical condition. They claimed to be trusted in the churchyard as they had been in the unconsecrated portions of the cemeteries. Then there were further restrictions which seemed utterly uncalled for. None of them wished that Burial services should be used for controversial purposes. They were as much interested in keeping their services free from that as the members of the Church of England, and it would not be needful to enforce these prohibitions by Act of Parliament. Why should it be declared that no address should be delivered which was not part of, or incidental to, a religious service permitted by the Act? Unless there were prayers,



reading of the Scriptures, or singing, it would be penal under the Act, and that was an utterly superfluous provision. (Applause.) In some quarters great dissatisfaction had been expressed with one particular clause, which said that nothing in this Act should interfere with the payment of fees to the clergy, even if they did not perform the service. (Cries of "Oh.") In Mr. Osborne Morgan's Bills no provision had been inserted for abolishing those fees, as they did not desire it to be supposed that they wished to inflict any pecuniary injury on the clergy. But if they did not stickle at this, it at least might be provided that those fees should only continue to be paid to the existing incumbents, clerks, and sextons. Notice had been given of an amendment of a serious nature, and they would not be surprised to hear that it came from Lord Salisbury. (Laughter.) The noble lord was silent during the debate on the second reading, but he had since given notice of an amendment, the effect of which would be to exempt from the operation of the Bill all the churchyards added by way of free gift during the last 50 years. The Lord Chancellor was most emphatic on this point, and said that when anyone gave a piece of land for public or parochial purposes they could no longer impose restrictions in regard to the use of it. (Applause.) So that whatever had been given to the Church formed part of the Church property with which the Legislature had a right to deal; a most valuable doctrine, of which it would possibly be necessary to remind Lord Selborne at some future time. One part of the question ought to excite interest in the minds of their town friends, who had not been interested so much in the matter as those who dwelt in the rural parishes. The theory of some politicians seemed to be that Church and Dissent ran always in family grooves, and that when burial provision was made for the family it would suffice for all future generations without occasioning any difficulties; whereas the truth was, that in these days men changed their theological opinions and ecclesiastical relationships, and so it turned out that it constantly happened that Churchmen wished to be buried with the service of the Church in the unconsecrated part, and, on the other hand, the Dissenter happened to have a grave in the other part, where he would like to have the services of an unconsecrated minister. This Bill, so far as it stood, would allow the services of the Nonconformists to be conducted in the consecrated as well as the unconsecrated parts, and, so far so good; but it made no reference to cases of proprietary companies, whose cemeteries were established under special Acts of Parliament, and the friends of the Church took care that its interests should be well cared for in those measures. This Bill, as he read it, would not apply to those cemeteries, so far as Nonconformist services in consecrated ground were concerned. At the same time, it was enacted that liberty should be given to the clergy to use the services of the Church in any unconsecrated burial ground, and now the Lord Chancellor proposed to enlarge the clause by saying that the relatives should have the right to call in the services of some other than their own clergyman, and that in any part of the ground. The consequence would be that the members of the Church of England would have full liberty to range over all those cemeteries; while the Nonconformists would be restricted to certain parts, and while they were not desirous of interfering with private rights they considered the Bill should apply to those cemeteries as well as to those which belonged to parishes. (Applause.) If this Bill were passed, consecration would be of no use in parochial cemeteries, and yet Burial Boards would be obliged to do all they were now doing. Some of them who were on Burial Boards knew well what was involved in having consecrated and unconsecrated ground, and when the Bill passed they would still be compelled to divide the cemeteries into consecrated and unconsecrated parts. The incumbent had the same privileges as in the churchyard, and even the clerk and sexton were entitled to receive the same fees. In other words, the consecrated portions in the cemeteries were now endowments for the Church, and it was, he believed, because the Government were afraid to touch that part of the question that this Bill stopped where it did. Those who happened to be Nonconformists might have their own views as to the necessity or wisdom of consecration, but they did not object to Episcopalians consecrating everything—earth, air, and sky, if they liked. (Laughter.) But it must not be done at the public expense, and Burial Boards must not be required to part off a portion of the ground, to be differently dealt with from the rest—the law must know nothing of consecration as a disqualifying and legal fact. (Applause.) He now came to the last aspect of the Bill: that which related to the relief of the clergy. That the Established clergy, and especially the Evangelical clergy, need some relief in this matter he supposed few would deny. So far back as 1851 as many as 3,814 clergymen memorialised the Episcopal Bench in favour of an alteration of the Burial Service. In 1863, again, 3,114 of the clergy petitioned the House of Lords to the same effect, but the memorial and petition proved to be fruitless, and it was only in the year 1870, when

Nonconformists were calling for relief, and were determined to have it, that some endeavour was made to obtain relief for the consciences of the clergy. They had all along been perfectly willing that Churchmen should devise a remedy for the existing grievance, if it were of a constitutional kind. But there were two ways of doing even right things, and the Government seemed to have chosen an unfortunate method in this Bill of giving relief to the clergy. He was referring to the basis on which the eleventh clause rested. This clause recited that the Convocation of Canterbury had offered certain recommendations in regard to the Burial Service, and that the Convocation of York had agreed in some of these, but dissented from others. It then enacted that any minister of the Church who acted in conformity with these recommendations should not be liable to pains and penalties. Why this reference to Convocation? Convocation in these later years had been seeking to obtain quasi legislative powers, and had actually framed a Bill, the drift of which was that when Convocation framed any law in relation to the ritual of the Church, Parliament should exercise only the power of veto. In conclusion, he would say he had criticised the Bill of the Government in no hostile or unfriendly spirit, but for practical purposes. It was hardly likely, seeing they had been engaged in this conflict during a whole generation, that they should allow the question to be disposed of in an unsatisfactory way. They considered they were doing their duty in trying at least to put this question into a right position; feeling assured that the better the work was done the more lasting it would prove, and the more thoroughly accomplish the object which the promoters of the Bill no doubt had in view. They believed the Government had made an honest attempt to deal with the question, and in nothing he had said had he wished to impugn the honesty of the Government. He hoped they would resist the attempts which would be made in the Lords to mutilate the Bill and to make its restrictions even more severe and objectionable than they were. He also hoped they would be willing to admit of some good amendments to the Bill; but if the Government did their best in the matter, they would not complain of the issue. If they were willing to stand by the principles enunciated by the Lord Chancellor, they would not blame the Government if they failed in their endeavours to carry through this measure. Only if the measure were passed, it could not be considered final, and would require amending at a future time. They must not be blamed hereafter of having accepted this measure as final, when they pointed out the very respects in which it might be needful for them to agitate hereafter. There were some people who thought he revelled in this question. It had been a subject of contention long enough. It was high time they ceased to fight battles over the graves of the dead, and, although they differed very much while alive, they might at least shake hands as Christian men as they wept over the remains of those whom God had taken from them. (Applause.)

The Rev. R. L. CARPENTER, of Bridport, proposed—

The Conference expresses its satisfaction at the early introduction of a Burials Bill by the new Government; as well as at the decisive majority by which it has been read a second time in the House of Lords. The Conference, at the same time, concurs with the Executive Committee in regard to the defective or objectionable character of some of the provisions of the Bill, and expresses a hope that it may be so amended as to become a completely satisfactory and effective measure.

There were two objections to Convocation dealing with the matter. They did not want to have anything more to do with Convocation than they could help, and Convocation was not regarded as representative of the feelings of the clergy. He had the greatest respect for a great number of the clergy, but when they came to this question it seemed to pervert their consciences. They wished to be at peace with their clerical friends, and that they should have equal access to all portions of the ground. (Applause.)

Mr. E. S. ROBINSON (Bristol) seconded the resolution, and, in doing so, congratulated the meeting on the early introduction of the Burials Bill by the new Government, and especially that it had already been read a second time in the House of Lords. About forty years ago Macaulay predicted that the House of Lords would not last twenty years, but by adapting itself to the wants of the people it had recovered itself in the estimation of the people of this country to a large extent, and he rejoiced that this measure had been brought in there, and in a form which, although not absolutely satisfactory to them, yet went a long way towards what they had long wished to have. (Applause.)

The Rev. A. MACKENNAL, B.A., of Bowdon, supported the resolution. They had had, from time to time, somewhat severely to criticise the conduct of members of the clerical profession as a whole, and he was happy to be able to speak of an instance in which a clergyman had shown the desire to extend the fullest liberty he possessed by allowing a partial service in his church by a Nonconformist minister at the burial of a Noncon-

formist child. (Applause.) He was quite certain this was not a solitary instance, and believed there were a number who would gladly extend liberty to their Nonconformist friends if they felt they could do so not only in harmony with the law, but in harmony with the unwritten law of the ecclesiastical community to which they belonged. He hoped the whole of the cemetery legislation would now pass under review, so that there might be no fragment of a sore left behind. (Applause.)

The Rev. T. NICHOLSON endorsed what the last speaker had said as to the kind feelings and great liberality of portions of the clergy of the Established Church. With regard to the Bill he believed every condition it contained which was really valuable was already permissive, and there was no statute law which forbade the interchange of Christian services. Three times had he taken part in the Burial Service with a clergyman of the Established Church, and with his concurrence, without any transgression of the law. He looked on the Bill as a good Bill, and thought it could be amended so as to be satisfactory; if not they had better wait a little longer.

Rev. Mr. HARCOURT said the resolution expressed a hope that the Bill might be so amended as to become a completely satisfactory and effective measure. But what if this hope were not realised? He thought, taking all things into consideration, it would be better to wait a little longer, and they would be sure to have a Bill more perfect than the present one. He would, therefore, propose that the following should be substituted instead of the words he had mentioned, viz., "expresses a hope that the executive will strongly urge upon their friends in the House of Commons that the Bill as it at present stands cannot be accepted as a settlement of the question."

Mr. HUTCHINSON, of Nottingham, seconded the amendment.

After a short discussion and some remarks by Mr. H. SPICER and Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS in favour of the resolution as it stood, the amendment was put, when it was lost, and the original resolution was adopted.

The proceedings then terminated.

### THIRD SITTING.

The Conference held its third sitting on Friday morning, under the presidency of the Hon. E. Lyulph Stanley, M.P. Among those present were:—Mr. Bryce, M.P., Mr. Barran, M.P., Mr. Tillet, M.P., Mr. Hutchinson, M.P., Sir H. Havelock-Allan, M.P., Mr. Peddie, M.P., Mr. Woodall, M.P., Mr. Frederic Harrison, Mr. C. P. Ilbert, Rev. Charles Stovel, Rev. J. G. Rogers, Mr. H. R. Ellington, Mr. J. Carvell Williams, Mr. Titus Salt, and Mr. J. J. Colman, M.P. There was again a large attendance.

Mr. ASHWORTH (Rochdale) reported the names of the gentlemen whom the Committee of Selection recommended as officers, Executive Committee, and council, for the ensuing three years. The committee, he said, had considered the instruction given by the Conference to have regard in selecting names for the new committee to the desirableness of securing the active co-operation of all sections of the Liberal party, and especially of prominent and active members of the various Liberal associations. The council included several gentlemen of the class described; but as the Executive Committee consisted only of seventy-five members, and as it was desirable in nearly all cases to retain the names of those who had already served, it had not been possible to make any considerable change on the present occasion; but the committee should keep the recommendation in view when filling up vacancies. In moving the adoption of the report of the Committee of Selection, he said that the gentlemen named had been chosen with very great judgment and a perfect regard for the promotion of the truest interests of the society.

Mr. E. D. WILLIAMS said he was one of the oldest members of the association; having joined it in 1844, and he had great pleasure in seconding the resolution.

The CHAIRMAN put the resolution to the meeting, and it was unanimously agreed to.

### NATIONAL EDUCATION & RELIGIOUS EQUALITY IN THE UNIVERSITIES.

The CHAIRMAN said the next resolution would be one relating to clerical fellowships, headships, and professorships at Oxford and Cambridge, and it had been thought better that he should defer his general remarks, which would be directed mainly to the question of education, so that they might come in strict continuity with the resolution. In their work of endeavouring to obtain religious equality and the emancipation of religion from all trammels or patronage by the State, he believed that the question of education must take a very prominent place. When people spoke of the Established Church they generally thought of its establishment in connection with its great endowments and its high places of dignity and political importance in the State; yet those who looked at the daily workings of our national life saw that the position of the Established Church

in connection with the education of the nation gave it a subtle and pervading influence, and did a great deal to build up the undue power of one sect. (Hear, hear.) Therefore the Liberation Society should never forget that one very important part of its duty was to secure perfect equality and freedom in the matter of education. (Hear, hear.) Although the Act of 1870 had faults of detail, he thought it was an immense step in the direction of religious equality, because for the first time it had recognised the national obligation of the people of this country, irrespective of sects, to provide for the elementary education of children. He believed the time was not far distant when, at any rate in the urban districts, a national and unsectarian education would be the predominant type of the education of the working classes. (Cheers.) Possibly, in the rural districts deficiency of education in self-government and apprehension of expense might somewhat further delay the advancement of a national system of education. He could not help hoping that, even with the legislative assistance they might look for from this Parliament, the great cause of public unsectarian national education would make more rapid strides than heretofore. With regard to training teachers for elementary schools it was important that this society and the Liberal party should do something, and not let that question lie dormant. As the teachers were, so would the taught be; and unless there were a true, liberal, broad spirit in the teachers they were in great danger of having unsatisfactory education imparted. At this moment about four-fifths of the training colleges of this country were exclusively Church of England. Those colleges were almost entirely supported by annual grants from the public exchequer. There was not an establishment in the country so directly under the control of Parliament, as far as granting money for expenses went, as the training colleges, and yet there was no public educational establishment so purely and absolutely denominational. (Hear, hear.) The colleges did not admit within their walls those students who at the Government examinations passed highest in the lists, but exercised the right of taking those far down the lists who were willing to submit themselves to denominational restrictions. Pupil teachers in the Board schools were often illegally refused admission when they sought to go to college, and teachers from Church schools let in and educated at the expense of the nation. He instanced the case of a girl who, on application at the Whitelands Church of England Training College, was told she could not be admitted unless she went through the ordinary curriculum and was confirmed. She would have submitted to the Church of England curriculum, but she would not haul down her flag and submit to the Church ordinance of confirmation—(cheers)—which was not in accordance with her religious convictions. The injustice practised by the training colleges was a question which ought to be raised in Parliament as soon as possible. (Hear, hear.) The Church of England valued very much the monopoly of the training colleges, because they imagined they could there inculcate teachers with Church prejudices, which would afterwards react upon their teaching in the schools. But he was not sure that they were so successful as they imagined. (Laughter.) He was not sure that the domineering way in which Church views were forced upon students at colleges did not create an impression which reacted in future life. (Hear, hear.) A more grave charge was that when students left a training college they were compelled in the first place to give their services to a denominational school, and were not allowed to seek the least remuneration in the open market. The system required to be thoroughly reformed. As to intermediate education, it had been hoped that the commission, with Lord Lyttelton at its head, would have been inclined to accept liberal principles; but the reactionary law passed by the late Parliament had altered the complexion of many things, and a claim must be made to have a far greater amount of the free representative element in the government of grammar schools. As to the Universities he did not think that anyone who knew the Universities in their present development could complain that the dominant spirit within them was one of exclusiveness or intolerance. The colleges welcomed merit, genius, and intellect from whatever sect they came. At the same time it was very important that the restrictions which remained should be removed as far as possible. They had a right to demand that, under the guise of conducting chapel services, and under the plea of providing for religious instruction, no attempt should be made to pack the governing body of the colleges with the clergy of the Church of England. (Cheers.) It would be perfectly possible to assign to a fellow who had chosen to take orders those services in the chapel, or to pay one or two chaplains, and a lecturer who should instruct Church of England students. It was especially important that the head of a college, who had most of the patronage, should be a person not pledged by his position to take sides in ecclesiastical questions. (Hear, hear.) Every headship and every fellowship of the colleges should be thrown open, and any provision for chapel services and religious instruction should be made independently by



the college assigning the duties to one fellow who happened to be clerical, and it should not be required that a fellow should be in orders as a necessary condition for his holding a fellowship. (Cheers.)

Mr. W. S. ALDIS, M.A. (Newcastle-on-Tyne), moved the following resolution:—

As the Commissioners appointed to effect further reforms in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge are engaged in framing new statutes for the colleges therein, the Conference approves of the motion of Mr. Roundell, M.P., affirming the inexpediency of retaining clerical restrictions in connection with any headship or fellowship in any college of such Universities. It also approves of the proposal of Mr. Bryce, M.P., for the abolition of such restrictions in connection with the professorships of Hebrew and of ecclesiastical history.

Before the passing of the University Tests Act of 1871, efforts were made to induce the present Prime Minister—(cheers)—to include the question they were at present discussing in the scope of the measure, but he declined to do so. The present Postmaster-General—(cheers)—moved an amendment during the discussion of the Act affirming that it was expedient to include the clerical fellowships within the scope of that Act, and that amendment was only rejected by a combination of official Liberals with the mass of the Tories. The society was not forcing a crotchet, but a principle adopted by the Liberal party. One reason the Prime Minister had given when he declined to entertain it was that it was adverse to that exceedingly venerable and respectable institution, the House of Lords. Another reason was that, in all probability before many years, a commission would be appointed to examine the whole question of the tenure of fellowships and college offices. The probable effect of the action of the commissioners would be in a direction opposite to that which they desired. As to the principle of clerical fellowships, most persons present would think it wrong that State funds should be devoted to the purpose of inducing men to undertake offices of religious instruction. (Hear, hear.) He took it that it was much more wrong to induce men to assume a nominal office of religious instructor without necessarily having the slightest intention of ever carrying out the duties of the office. (Cheers.) In the majority of cases there was not necessarily any intention to take clerical duty. Many of the clerical fellowships were held by men desirous of becoming clergymen; but those men would become clergymen even if there were no clerical restriction on the fellowship. The society ought not to be contented until the high offices in the colleges and Universities had been thrown open to every man in the nation, irrespective of his creed. (Cheers.) Most gentlemen present imagined the day would come when the Church of England would be disestablished. (Cheers.) When that day came one of the most difficult questions would be the amount of compensation to be granted to vested interests, and he would be sorry if the compensation were arranged in anything like the way it was arranged for the Irish Church. He thought it desirable that as many vested interests as possible should be got rid of before the day came. If Mr. Roundell's motion were properly supported in the House of Commons, it would be carried in such a way that very speedy action would necessarily follow. He urged all present to use all their influence to induce Members of Parliament to attend and vote in favour of the motion. (Cheers.)

Mr. HENRY SPICKER (London), in seconding the resolution, said he considered that the difficulty which prevented the Premier from dealing with this question some years back was his fear that a religious influence would be taken away from the colleges and undergraduates if the resolution were allowed to pass. That was a question which required to be threshed out, in order to get the hearty support of such a man as Mr. Gladstone and the other religious Liberals of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords. (Hear, hear.) He was convinced that the maintenance of clerical restrictions on fellowships, far from being a help to the religious influence of the governing authorities of the colleges, was really a substantial hindrance and difficulty, and that there would be a freer, truer, more earnest religious influence in the colleges if the restrictions were done away with. The removal of the restrictions would prevent some from taking orders who were absolutely unfitted to take orders. (Hear, hear.) The system of daily prayers caused the men at certain times of the day to visit the college, and did not allow them to go as far as Newmarket from Cambridge, or some similar place near Oxford. (Cheers.) It was kept up as a means of managing the men far more than for any other reason, and he believed it had a hurtful influence over young men. In the interests of the nation they claimed that the Universities should be the free and open education ground of the entire people, whatever their religious views, or the absence of their religious views might be. He was thankful that Mr. Bryce had put his amendment upon the paper in the House of Commons—(hear, hear)—for he did not believe that Hebrew required to be taught by a member of the clerical profession, and it would be a gain if some men of true historical insight would come to the study of ecclesiastical history with what he might call

a layman's prepossessions. (Cheers.) He would be exceedingly thankful if the House of Commons accepted Mr. Bryce's proposal. (Cheers.) They must not yield in the conflict until from the very lowest of their primary schools to the very highest positions in the Universities, every place of honour or profit was freely open to every individual Englishman, whatever his religious opinions might be. (Cheers.)

Mr. JAMES BRYCE, M.P. (Tower Hamlets), in supporting the resolution, said they were asking that the principle conceded by the Act of 1871 should receive full application. That Act started from the principle that the benefits of the Universities should be made freely accessible to the nation. As regarded religious instruction, they would not contend that anything should be done to destroy the religious character of the Universities. But the religious character of the Universities did not necessarily mean the Anglican character of the Universities. (Hear, hear.) Their Anglican friends were very fond of assuming that the two terms were convertible—that to be religious meant to be a member of the Church of England. They had the amplest experience to show that tests did not secure or strengthen religion, but rather tended to injure and weaken it. That religious instruction could only be given by clergymen was far from being true, and many present would confess that the most morally religious instruction they had ever received had been received from laymen. (Hear, hear.) Sunday-school teachers were a great body of instructors in religion. (Hear, hear.) It was felt by residents in the Universities that it was an injustice to the lay members, tutors, and lecturers of the colleges to suppose they were incapable of giving religious instruction. (Cheers.) It would be easy for the head and fellows of a college to nominate a chaplain or two chaplains to conduct religious services; therefore, there was no reason for keeping clericals in the fellowships for the sake of the services. The principles laid down in the Act of 1871 required that the offices and emoluments should be thrown freely open to the whole nation. The Universities were national institutions for the promotion of education and learning, and ought not to have any connection whatever with any religious denomination. (Hear, hear.) The Universities Tests Act excepted the professorship of divinity; it appearing more than doubtful whether any such professorship or any theological faculty could be established which should be altogether unconnected with any particular religious denomination. But on coming to the subjects of Hebrew and ecclesiastical history, that was different ground, and those were subjects that ought to be open to the best men without distinction of creed. (Cheers.) They were obliged to take most of their ecclesiastical history from German books, and most of their Hebrew from Germany and Scotland; and if those subject to some extent languished in England, one reason was to be found in the way in which they had been made the bond-slaves of theology. (Hear, hear.) The professorships of those two subjects were in the patronage of the Crown, and the Crown as representing the nation, having the right to nominate to those chairs, might fairly claim to have its choice as wide as possible. (Hear, hear.) The operation of the Universities Tests Act had been a little disappointing in one point—namely, that there had not gone to Oxford so many Nonconformists as they had expected would go there. Many parents thought their sons would be exposed to influences adverse to Nonconformist faith; but he believed that impression was to a great extent unfounded. Nonconformist parents might feel that their sons had not a proper opportunity of obtaining instruction in the subjects which they meant to study for the work of the ministry, because the chairs connected with theological studies are all in the hands of clergymen of the Church of England; but if those chairs were lay chairs, that feeling would be removed. It was not thirty years since the test of subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles was imposed on undergraduates, and when they thought of what had since passed, they might take courage for the future, and feel that the hour of final triumph was not far off. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. FREDERIC HARRISON also supported the resolution. He had lately returned from a visit to Oxford, and said that the feeling of the residents there who had taken the Liberal side in this question was hostile to the course of the commissioners. He cited instances of clerical restriction upon a headship and a fellowship of colleges, where the result of appeals to the commission had been unsatisfactory. Unquestionably there were upon the commission men in whom they had the greatest confidence; but there were also men upon it (as there were men in the present Government) who had given pledges that they were about to do nothing voluntarily to reduce the legal position of the Established Church. (Cheers.) Ample time should be given for the consideration of the resolutions and decisions of the committee before they became law. (Hear, hear.) The House of Commons and the public should know how this commission was going on. He was not satisfied that that real progress was being made in the opening of the Universities which they had a right to expect from the legislative progress which had been made. There

was always working among the residents in the Universities an immense steady dead-weight of strictly clerical and Established Church influence. (Cheers.) Influence were won by the legitimate energy of the Church of England they could only meet it by increased efforts on their own side. It behoved them to watch with the greatest possible diligence every step taken in the work of reforming and introducing changes in the Universities, otherwise they might have the whole work won in the House of Commons and before the country stolen back by that silent, steady pressure which worked by a hundred means, and which was familiarly known as inserting the thin end of the wedge. (Cheers.) He trusted that throughout the country every means would be taken to induce members of Parliament to support the motion to be made in the House of Commons. (Cheers.)

Mr. LIBERT (Fellow of Balliol College) read a petition to the House of Commons from members of the University of Oxford representing all shades of Liberalism, including heads of colleges, clerical and lay professors, tutors and lecturers, praying that appointments to offices and emoluments should as far as possible be made according to personal merit and fitness. The petitioners, Mr. Libbert explained, desired that no new clerical offices should be created, and that all existing clerical restrictions should be removed. Those present would do useful work if they asked their friends in the House to go at least as far as the prayer of the petition, and he would ask them to go just one step further—a step which marked the difference between the respectable, but not very vigorous, Liberalism of Oxford and the more robust Liberalism which prevailed outside the University, and it also marked the distinction between the prayer of the residents and the resolution to be moved by Mr. Roundell in the House. As he understood it, the resolution went to this point: Under a section of the Act of 1877, a certain amount of liberty was allowed to the Commissioners in their way of framing the statutes; they were empowered to make such provision as appeared to them requisite for providing religious instruction. It was understood that the Commons had come to the conclusion that, in order to meet that provision, it was necessary to place on the governing body of each college a certain number of clergy. It was from that conclusion the society wished to dissent. (Hear, hear.) That conclusion was not warranted by the denominational requirements of the Act of 1871, and it was inconsistent with the undenominational provisions of the Act of 1871. The conclusion at which the Commons had arrived interfered with a great principle, and the society asked that the contrary of it might be affirmed. (Hear, hear.)

The resolution was then carried.

#### LITIGATION IN THE ENGLISH ESTABLISHMENT.

Rev. J. G. ROGERS, B.A., who was received with loud applause, moved—

In reviewing the events which have followed the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act, the Conference is of opinion that the Act has not only wholly failed to accomplish its professed object, but has proved the occasion of many and grave scandals, which have been calculated to weaken the authority of law and of those who administer it, to affect injuriously the character of the Church of England, and even to bring discredit on religion. The Conference entertains no doubt that the litigation which during the last few years has been one of the most conspicuous features in the history of the English Establishment, has convinced large numbers of the Episcopal body of the impossibility of combining the free action of an earnest Church with the restraints imposed by the Acts of Parliament which govern an Establishment, and which, of necessity, are enforced by the coercive machinery of secular tribunals. It also cherishes the belief that those who now are pained by occurrences which good men and good citizens alike deplore will ultimately be led to seek for a remedy—not in new attempts to regulate religious worship and action by means of legislation, but in the employment of the spiritual forces at the command of religious communities which are free from the control, because existing without the patronage and the authority of the State.

In doing so he said it was a very pleasant thing to feel, as one did feel more and more in a Conference like this, how very rapidly the Disestablishment movement was ceasing to be a Nonconformist or sectarian movement in any sense, and how rapidly it was becoming a movement of a purely national character. (Applause.) The fact was that they had swept away their grievances to such an extent that they would find it very hard, when they had once got rid of burial restrictions, clerical fellowships, and headships, to discover a grievance about which to make a commotion at all. (Laughter.) That was a very happy thing for the society, and it was equally good for the nation, because they would be able to concentrate their thoughts more upon the national aspects of the great question they were met to consider. (Applause.) He granted that the principles of Nonconformists had been somewhat severely tested lately; but he would say for himself—and he might say it for the whole of the Conference—that they were contending not for Nonconformist, but for national rights; that they saw no reason why Romanism should constitute a bar to public employment—(applause)—and that they

had no notion of allowing certain gentlemen in the House of Commons—frequenters and patrons of the Derby and the like—to decide in what way the religion of Christ could best be proclaimed, and to institute, in this year of grace 1880, a test for admission to Parliament of which they thought they had got rid for ever. (Loud applause.) They had been seeking steadily to work their own way towards the one principle for which they contended, namely that a man's religious convictions was a matter between himself and his God, and had nothing whatever to do with his civil and political privileges. (Applause.) Referring to the resolution, he said he hoped it showed that they were not taking up the question relative to ecclesiastical litigation in the interest of Protestantism or any other *ism*. He did think as a Protestant that he might have a right to protest against Romanising tendencies which he observed in the Church of England. He would not do so on the Liberation platform, but his friend Mr. Dale and himself intended to do it before long on a separate platform. (Loud applause.) It was true they could not help touching this question even from the side of the "ism" in one sense, because they were continually told that the Church of England was the grand bulwark of Protestantism—"Oh!" and laughter)—and their endeavours to establish religious equality were perpetually met by the assertion that they were playing into the hands of the Church of Rome. If there was anybody playing into the hands of the Church of Rome the culprits must be sought for elsewhere—they must be sought for within the Establishment, and not outside of it. He would further say deliberately that they must be sought for mainly, not among the Ritualists of the Church of England but amongst the Evangelical party, who by their weakness, their tacit connivance, their readiness to gloss over anything that would threaten the safety of their beloved Establishment, had done more to advance the movement against which they contended than all the men who ostensibly carried it out. (Applause.) The other evening a gentleman told him of an excellent Evangelical clergyman, who said, "The most remarkable illustration that I have had of the working of an overruling Providence that has come under my observation is the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act. (Laughter.) He said it was a heaven-sent measure, but it could not have been passed if there had not been a heaven-born Minister who was prepared to accept and to endorse it. (Laughter.) He (Mr. Rogers) did not wish to be irreverent, but he believed that when Providence worked, it worked in a very different way. (Hear, hear.) He should have liked to ask that gentleman what single good even his own party had been able to secure from this much-vaunted Act, what single ceremony they had been able to put down, what one clergyman they had been able to expel from the Anglican Church by virtue of this wonderful Act. He held that whether the Ritualist party was a good or a bad one, it was stronger to-day than when the Act was passed, because it caused a reaction of sympathy on behalf of its members. (Hear, hear.) There was an illustration of an overruling Providence that one might see if he was so disposed, but he never happened to interpret public events in that way. He would have said to that clergyman if he wanted to find such an illustration, that it would be found in the judicial blindness that had fallen on a class of men calling themselves not only servants, but teachers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—a judicial blindness which had fallen upon them because of their leaning on human props, and depending on State power—such judicial blindness that when they had before them two men, one a man of integrity and honour and conscience and principle, and the other a man of tricks and expedients, they did not know the good, and they chose the evil. (Loud and prolonged applause.) The day would come when even the Evangelical party of the Church of England would repent that they had put their faith in Lord Beaconsfield. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) At present, the effect upon the country was this: they saw those men, with their boasted regard for what they called Protestant interests, and with their intense reverence for the Public Worship Regulation Act, unable to forgive the integrity and humanity of the great Liberal leader. (Applause.) At present, the whole of the ecclesiastical law had become a scandal to the nation. He would ask was there ever a judgment given in a court of law in this country which could at all compare with that which had been delivered by Lord Penzance last Saturday? Poor Lord Penzance—(laughter)—who was the perpetual butt of every Church scribe who was not satisfied with the course that the law had taken, had at last awakened to the conviction that it was high time that he should not be made a fool of any longer—(laughter)—for to that, and that only, did his judgment come. He had given one judgment after another against Mr. Mackonochie, and Mr. Mackonochie was defying the law still, and Lord Penzance had resolved not to pronounce any more judgments. (Laughter.) This was a subject for very grave and serious consideration. The court over which Lord Penzance presides was a court of High Judicature in the nation. He was called to the peerage in reward for



his judicial abilities. He was a judge, and yet he and his court were simply brought into contempt in the presence of the whole country by these miserable attempts to strangle the faith by Acts of Parliament and courts of law—attempts which never did succeed, and which were not destined to succeed now. What was the effect that was being produced? He had got an extract from the *Standard*, which said, in commenting on this judgment of Lord Penzance, "Meanwhile, the effect of this apparent total inability on the part of the law to restrain these ecclesiastical successes is most injurious to the Established Church. It tends to weaken her position from two opposite points of view. It has always been known that some of the most extreme ceremonialists fancy that by the separation of the Church and State they would obtain more liberty for themselves; but it is now beginning to be said by the opponents of these men, that if the State cannot protect them, they must try and do what they can without the State, so that while the Ritualists look to Disestablishment to save themselves from the moderate party, the moderate party are looking to Disestablishment to save themselves from the Ritualists. (Laughter.) Liberatorists were evidently advancing. They had no need to be in a hurry, because people on both sides were coming to their assistance, and were beginning to see that it was never intended by God, and ought never to be intended by man, that Parliament and laws should have anything to do with the creeds, churches, or religious systems. (Applause.) Those who would be free must pay the price. At a great price they had obtained their present freedom. Nobody interfered with Nonconformists, nobody attempted to foist Ritualism upon them; they walked in the light of liberty; but then it had been won by many a hard toil, and many a bitter struggle. If they would be free they must take the obligations of liberty as well as bear its honours and its joys. (Applause.) What was to be done with the great Parliament that had been got together in the way of securing the further accomplishment of the objects the society had in view, and which he thought Churchmen would begin to have in view, he was not prepared at present to say, but the resolution suggested one point on which he must dwell for a moment or two. He did not wish to see any premature movement, but he might say that they had fought a great battle on distinctly clear and intelligible grounds. They were as much in favour of religious equality as ever, and meant to educate the people in their great work. He did not think their object was to be attained by any movement that would tend to destroy the Liberal party. It had been hard enough work to build up that Liberal majority, and he did not envy the man, either in Parliament or out of Parliament, among the Liberal party, who would go to break it up again. (Hear, hear.) He was confident in the men that had been put in power, and he was not going to withdraw that confidence in three weeks because they could not build Rome in a day. (Hear, hear.) They would never bring about Disestablishment by a party, still less by a section of the Liberal party; they must do that which would convince the nation that the best thing for the nation, for the Church, and for public justice, was that religion should be perfectly free; and in the work of education to which he had alluded, God helping him, he would take part, and they would all take part together. (Hear, hear.) It would be a hard work, but they must try and do it. In the meantime, he would say to their friends in the Government, as a matter of practical caution—"Be sure and do not take up that troubled question of Church Reform. Don't go about and try to patch up this old Establishment in the hope of giving it a larger lease of life. If you do not mean to help us, do not shatter your party on a rock like that, because, be certain of it, you will not reform the Church. As soon as you attempt the work, the very men who call themselves reformers will be the very men to sit in judgment as your critics upon you. You will not reform the Church, but you will split your party. But if we are not going to split it, we have the right to ask that you will not split it." He did not believe in any grand scheme of Church reform, but he did believe in its peril to the Liberal party. It was not in that direction their strength lay. Around them, on every side, they heard cries of weakness, and sometimes of despair. They saw men who ought to know better dependent on the arm of flesh when they ought to have trusted in the loving God. They saw them trusting to all kinds of charlatanism and impudence, trusting all things, and enduring all things at the hands of a party, because it called itself the friend of the Church, while all the time the cherished objects they had in view were not being promoted. If Protestantism needed salvation, it was not being saved, and the whole drift and tendency of all ecclesiastical thought and feeling was in the direction of priestcraft—that priestcraft which was a curse to every country where it was found. (Loud applause.) They had seen the law defeated, the courts powerless, men daring to say that they would not submit to the control of the State, from which they accept their patronage and their position. They, as Liberatorists, would maintain, by all means in their power, that the one only remedy was to do away with the

National Church, and to give to every one perfect religious equality. (Loud cheers.)

The Rev. C. H. COLLINS, of Wirksworth, seconded the resolution. He said he was a clergyman of the Church of England, but the fact was, that he was unattached and unbenevolent. (Laughter.) He would not say that that was the reason that his eyes saw more clearly, but had it been that he was in possession of £1,400 a year, it was less likely that he should have spoken on that platform. (Laughter.) His days had been passed chiefly in scholastic work, as master of one of the old grammar-schools. Since he had retired from the work of teaching he had not attached himself to any particular congregation, and it was not his intention to do so. As a clergyman of the Church of England he most heartily and cordially seconded the resolution. (Applause.) Speaking of the Public Worship Regulation Act, he said that our late miraculous Premier—(laughter)—had been accustomed often when discussing such questions to appeal to his "historic conscience." (Laughter.) His idea was that Lord Beaconsfield appealed to his historic conscience because it was the only conscience he had got. (Much laughter.) He thought that the members of the Conference, although claiming to have other consciences, might also appeal to their historic conscience with regard to the success or failure of the Public Worship Regulation Act, which had totally and entirely and egregiously failed. It had not succeeded in doing a single thing it intended to do. It had not only left Ritualism where it was, but it was infinitely stronger to-day than it was before the passing of the Act. It was not possible for Acts of Parliament to rule the spiritual emotions of men. He was not ashamed to confess to the Conference that he owed a debt of the deepest gratitude to the great Nonconformist teachers of this country for having brushed aside the prejudices of his early education by their speaking and preaching and writing, and for having, by the help of God, enlightened his soul on the great and most important question of Disestablishment. (Applause.) It had been said that the House of Commons could do anything; but however powerful it might be, it could not control the spiritual instincts of the nation. He most heartily and entirely endorsed the principle of entire separation of Church and State, and entire and perfect disendowment of the Church to which he belonged. (Applause.) He believed no happier day would dawn for that Church itself and for the religious state of the country than that day when we should awake to know that the Queen's sign manual had been placed to that Act of Parliament with which she enfranchised the Church of England through the whole of her realms. (Applause.)

The Rev. C. STOVEL, who expressed his pleasure to be able, after long years of anxiety and affliction, to be present to take part in the proceedings, said that there was not one amongst them who could look at the present state of the Liberation Society with more gratitude than he did, when he remembered the tribulations endured when its labours commenced, the struggles through which their agents had passed, and when he saw what, if they used it wisely, was a prelude to a perfect victory. (Applause.) He counselled them not to suffer their hopes and their efforts to decline. They ought to remember that the triumph of their cause involved the honour of their God, and the hope of millions for eternity; yet at the same time it would be for them to be very thoughtful, and while they pleaded for freedom of thought and opinion to take the apostle's caution to think soberly, grasping the main object of their pursuit, holding it fast against all adversity, and cherishing the hope of their triumph not in what they were, but in what God in His great mercy should grant them to enjoy through His condescension and blessing. (Hear, hear.) It was now nearly seventy years since he had had to do first with Dissenting schools and churches, and he had had to deal with the principles of the society more or less for sixty years. And when the principle of the society was first declared he had to meet his officers on the Sabbath morning, and one of them said they were never ashamed of their pastor before. (Laughter.) He very much wished that the good man who had uttered that speech was present among them, because he would perhaps say that he was not now exactly ashamed of that part of his pastor's conduct. He referred to an interview he had had, with some others, many years ago in the infancy of the movement with Earl Grey, who asked a deputation of Dissenters why, if they wanted the separation of Church and State, they did not say so. The speaker paid a high tribute to the services which had been rendered to the cause by Mr. Miall, who at the outset had scarcely a friend, who had manfully breasted the opposing wave, and who shook with confidence and spirit—if he might use the illustration—the dew-drops from the lion's mane. (Laughter and loud applause.) The movement under Mr. Miall had since advanced with steady and persevering strides. ("Hear, hear," and applause.) He counselled workers in the cause to use every legitimate and honourable means to carry out their object.

The resolution was put and carried unanimously.

#### THE SALE OF LIVINGS.

Mr. W. CLARK, M.A. (one of the Secretaries), in the absence of Mr. W. Angus, of Manchester (whose intended speech was taken as read and ordered to be printed and circulated), moved the following resolution:—

The Conference rejoices that a large number of the members of the Church of England now as strongly condemn as the members of other Churches have always condemned the traffic in patronage rights which is carried on, with the sanction of law, in the English Establishment. The Conference is, however, of opinion that the recommendations of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the working of the existing law of patronage are altogether inconsistent with the principle adopted by the Commissioners, that patronage is in the nature of a trust, and are totally inadequate to effect the changes which are required in the interest of religion, as well as of that of the Church of England. They are, at the same time, of opinion that the difficulties of adequately dealing with the present system of patronage will prove to be insuperable so long as the Church continues to be a national institution, supported by public endowments, and upheld by public authority.

The Rev. T. GREEN, M.A., (of Ashton) seconded the resolution. Referring to its terms, he said that the subject of the sale of livings, when looked at either on the political side or the religious side, was one which demanded their most earnest attention. He had great respect for his friends North of the Tweed; but he had no sympathy with them in the complaint some of them made that we, on this side of the Tweed, had not done our duty by them in regard to the question of Disestablishment; but the reason was they knew that their Scotch friends were able to carry their point themselves. He did not think the question of Scotch Disestablishment, important though it was and immediate though it might be, was a question that was likely to hold with sufficient tenacity on English electors, for the reason that the Scotch were able to mind their own business. The other question the resolution brought before them was one exceedingly pressing, and he thought it would be an unfortunate thing to bring themselves to the conclusion that they could not do anything with the law of patronage until they had obtained Disestablishment and Disendowment. Why could not they make it a point which was to be worked at until they carried their object? He might advance a great many reasons for it, but he might be content with one, which was of a similar kind to that presented by Mr. Aldis in the morning in relation to the college endowments. Mr. Aldis said very truly that it was highly desirable they should get matters of that kind before they obtained Disendowment, because if Disestablishment and Disendowment came before this question was settled, there would be an enormous amount claimed for compensation; and in regard to the question of Church patronage, it would be politic as well as right to work at it as well as they could, without allowing themselves to say that there was no possible remedy for this grievous and political defect except Disestablishment. He regretted the absence of Mr. Angus, who had worked the subject splendidly, and he hoped that those gentlemen who had taken a great interest in the subject would continue their efforts, and that they would be much multiplied. (Applause.)

#### CLOSING PROCEEDINGS.

The SECRETARY read a resolution passed on the previous day at the Primitive Methodist Conference sitting at Grimsby, expressing sympathy with the Liberation Society in its aims and objects.

Mr. Alderman GRIPPER, of Nottingham, moved—

That the Conference desires warmly to thank Mr. Henry Lee, M.P., Mr. James Stewart, and the Hon. E. L. Stanley, M.P., for presiding at the several sittings of the Conference, and also the committees and secretaries for the services they have rendered in the discharge of their respective duties.

Mr. COLMAN, M.P., briefly seconded the resolution, which was carried, and, the CHAIRMAN having responded, the Conference was dissolved.

#### THE PUBLIC MEETING.

The annual public meeting was held in the evening at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, which was crowded in every part. The chair was taken by Mr. Illingworth, M.P.; and on the platform were:—Mr. Barran, M.P.; Mr. Collings, M.P.; Mr. Firth, M.P.; Mr. Middleton, M.P.; Mr. Titus Salt, the Rev. A. Oliver (Glasgow), the Rev. Dr. Hutton (Pai-ley), Mr. H. R. Ellington, Mr. J. Templeton, Mr. G. C. Whiteley, the Rev. Dr. Allon, Mr. A. G. Kitching, the Rev. F. Trestrail, Mr. J. Carvell Williams, Professor Newth, and numerous delegates from the country.

Mr. BARRAN, M.P., who took the chair temporarily owing to the non-arrival of Mr. Illingworth at the commencement of the proceedings, said that he had been nearly forty years an anti-State Churchman, and he remembered when at first they were few in number, though strong in principle. He did not appear at that meeting as a

Dissenter. It was true he was a Baptist—(cheers)—and he was proud of being one, but he was something more—he was an Englishman, and desired that his fellow-men should enjoy the freedom which had been bought for them by their forefathers. Until they enjoyed that freedom to the fullest extent, they ought not to cease their efforts to secure it. As Dissenters, they had nearly everything they desired. The Burials question would be settled during the present Session, and, step by step, they had been securing their rights and privileges. But there were still those who were in bondage whom they should remember. It had been suggested that they ought to seek to reform the Church, instead of trying to disestablish it. That, however, was not their business. If the Church wished to be Ritualistic, or Romanish, or Evangelical, it had a right to be so; but the Church had no right to ask him to be responsible for its doctrines—(hear, hear)—and so long as it claimed to be the Church of England, he, as a Dissenter, would enter his protest, and use his efforts for the severance of a connection which he believed was destructive to the best interests of the Church, and degrading to those who were outside its pale. He admitted that he was a political Dissenter; but it was not from choice. He did not wish to destroy the Church, but he wanted to destroy Dissent—(cheers and laughter)—and the only way of destroying Dissent was to disestablish the Church. He wished them all God-speed in their work, and hoped that before long the Church would be free, that the nation would rejoice, and God's work be done in the world. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Illingworth), who arrived during Mr. Barran's address, after apologising for his unavoidable detention, said that those who were responsible for public movements and sought to influence public opinion, were called upon as one of their first duties to be candid with the public. The Liberation Society had that quality of candour, and the world knew what were its objects and its weapons. It was one of the best understood and best abused societies in England. It sought to secure absolute religious equality in the only possible way, by the disestablishment of the two established churches of the country—(cheers)—liberating them alike from State patronage and State control. After a long struggle they had secured toleration for a diversity of religious opinions, and now they had almost complete religious liberty; but they had to travel a stage further, and secure complete religious equality. In the memorable year 1869 religious equality was decreed by the voice of the nation for Ireland, and even Episcopalians themselves admitted that that country was the better for the change then brought about. A source of discord had been removed, and a stigma upon the Protestant religion. In Scotland two-thirds of the worshippers belonged to the voluntary churches, and he believed if the question were submitted to the householders of the country three-fourths of them would declare for religious equality. (Cheers.) Public opinion was supreme in this country, and when there was a fair distribution of political power he believed that Parliament would carry out the wishes of the people in reference to this great question. It was impossible that an institution could be long maintained against which a majority of the people had declared. As to Wales, five-sixths of the people were Nonconformists; and in Cornwall and other counties, or divisions of counties, a similar state of things prevailed. In his own part of the country it was acknowledged on all hands that wherever there was life in the churches, not merely among Nonconformists but among Churchmen, it was manifested by a reliance upon, and an exercise of, the voluntary principle. (Hear, hear.) Six years ago they were told by Mr. Disraeli that they ought, as Nonconformists, to be modest, and not take too exaggerated a view of their power, since household suffrage had brought a force into the Constitution over which they had no control. The Liberal party, as a whole, was no doubt discomfited and dismayed, but even the new Parliament, of which Mr. Disraeli was the head, showed that the Liberation wing had not suffered as the less advanced Liberals had done. The dilemma of the Liberal party was the opportunity of the Liberatorists. They saw that there was likely to be a complete vacuum, and they resolved to fill it. They raised a large special fund, and sent their agents and printed tracts all over the country, appealing to all classes, including the agricultural labourers; and if he were asked whether the seed then sown had lain dead in the ground, he asked them to look at the results of the late General Election. (Cheers.) It was true they were not allowed to have the whole of the six years unembarrassed by any other public complication. Foreign affairs took a turn that for a time diverted the attention of the people; and, being Englishmen and patriots as well as Liberatorists, they at once joined the main force of the Liberal party to hurl Lord Beaconsfield from power—(loud cheers)—resolving to wait with patience for what the future might bring them. They would probably hear from Mr. Williams how many adherents there were of religious equality of the House of Commons. They knew well there was not a



Liberal in Scotland who, when the proper time came, would hesitate to give a vote for disestablishment. The whole range of their leaders, representing all the sections of the party, were equally committed to the policy whenever the time came for the hour to strike. It was only due to the Government and Lord Selborne, who had charge of the Burials Bill, to express their gratitude for the promptness with which they had dealt with the question. There had been brought into the House of Lords, and carried through its second reading, a measure which would in a great degree satisfy the claims of those who had been pressing the question for more than a quarter of a century. When it got to the House of Commons it might be examined there, and perhaps some amendments might be made, and he was sanguine enough to believe that those amendments would not be refused by the Upper House. They might also, with special gratitude, acknowledge their obligations to the bishops. (Laughter.) They were not going to turn the gift over and look at it from all sides; they would not go into the motives which might have influenced them, or even examine the arguments made use of a year or two ago by the Archbishop of Canterbury, when he appealed to his episcopal brethren and the great Church party in the House of Lords to get the question settled and out of the way on account of the danger which surrounded it. (Laughter.) It was enough that as they neared the settlement of public questions they seemed to be more agreed, and nothing like acrimony was allowed to intervene. When the burials question was settled their capital of grievances as Dissenters would be almost gone: the redress of smaller grievances, but grievances deeply affecting the honour and position of students at the universities, would come in due time. No doubt the keeping open of the score of the burials question had been serviceable in many quarters, and nowhere more than among their Wesleyan friends, in showing them how intolerant in practice, as well as unsound in principle, was any religious favouritism and monopoly in the country. (Cheers.) But he for one rejoiced that the ground was being cleared, and that the approaching contention was left without any smaller or side issues. He would not be venturesome enough to say how soon they would have another advance. It could not be long delayed. Another dissolution might come, or even before that time some propositions might come from influential and official quarters; but he was satisfied that what was taking place within the Church of England was doing more than they could reckon upon towards hastening disestablishment. In the Church, whatever had its root in force was going down, and whatever had its root in willingness was springing up and growing stronger every day. The law courts of the country were being scandalised by decisions and the flouting of those decisions. A short time ago the High Church party was declaring that if it could not have its own way it would go in for disestablishment. But now some of its boldest men were saying that they had altered their minds upon the subject. Archdeacon Denison had recently declared that he had changed his opinion, and that he was not in favour of disestablishment, because he thought the Ritualists were going to win in the Church. (Laughter.) That might be so. It was not for them to interfere between the two sections of the Church on a political platform; but he was convinced that there were crowds of honest and influential Churchmen in the Establishment who, rather than stultify and compromise themselves, would in their own way work towards the end, which the Liberationists had in view—the disestablishment and disendowment of the English Church. (Cheers.) The Liberation Society's work in future would have to be directed to those parts of the country which were not so well-informed as the rest. They had the gratification of knowing that in all the great boroughs of the kingdom, the question had taken such a hold upon the public mind that religious equality was incorporated in the platform of the Liberal party. In Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Bristol, Birmingham, and other large towns, where there was great political activity, and a large, independent population, the question was practically settled. What they had to do was to go to the smaller places in the counties, and not to overlook the agricultural labourer. He had more faith in the agricultural labourer than in the farmer. He did not mean to say that he had not any hope in the farmer, because what had been done for him—(laughter)—would place him in a much more independent position. But what they wanted was that an intelligent jury might be empanelled, and that they might be allowed to make their appeal to it. They were not at all afraid as to what the verdict would be. (Cheers.)

Mr. J. CARVELL WILLIAMS was then called upon to move the following resolution:—

The meeting, in reviewing the society's proceedings during another triennial period, is greatly encouraged by the obvious advance of public opinion in favour of its principles and objects—an advance resulting, not merely from the action of the society, but from growing dissatisfaction with the practical working of the established systems.

He said: You will see from the terms of the resolution that this is not merely an

annual but a triennial meeting, for it is held in connection with the society's twelfth triennial conference. The general election disturbed a great many people's plans—(laughter)—and ours among the number. We ought to have held this Conference in the merry month of May, and we greatly feared that its postponement until nearly the middle of June, and the fact that it was needful to hold it on Thursday and Friday instead of Tuesday and Wednesday, would greatly militate against its success. Now the Conference is over—well over, I am happy to add. We have had appointed upwards of 800 delegates, and we have had a very large attendance. We had unanimity, earnestness, and practical and spirited discussions from the beginning to the end. The society has now been reorganised for another three years' work, and we start upon that work without, so far as the Conference is concerned, the slightest misgiving. (Cheers.) Since the last triennial meeting held within this building, a great many things have happened. (Laughter.) The country has had to free itself from the entanglements and dangers of the Eastern question. It has unhappily been engaged in two unrighteous wars, and it has had to rid itself of the Tory Government. (Cheers.) What is still better, it has had to call Mr. Gladstone back to office. (Loud cheers.) A series of events like these could not but exert a considerable influence upon any public movement, and, of course, they have exercised a perceptible influence upon ours. As the chairman has told you, after the General Election of 1874, we had a clear stage before us. The Liberal party had nothing to offer to the country; we had. The Liberal party after their defeat at the last election were without a programme, and without heart, and apparently without hope. The Liberationists had their programme, and were full of heart and hope. Well, we made hay while the sun shone, and we made plenty of it, and good hay, and we safely housed it. During the last three years when we have had to contend with circumstances of a somewhat adverse kind, we have, of course, been obliged to alter the character of our work and to diminish somewhat its extent. But after all it is no bad tale that we have to tell you to-night, for within the last three years we have held no fewer than 2,000 meetings, and we have distributed as many as seven millions of publications. (Cheers.) These meetings have been held, and these publications have gone, almost everywhere. They have been held and distributed not, as of old, only in the great centres of population, but in the sparsely-populated districts and among the agricultural population—among those who before long will have votes. (Hear, hear.) The revolution in the counties which many of us have long been sighing for has begun; it will go on, and by-and-by we shall witness what a few years ago would have been thought impossible—the return, not merely by large towns, of those who are in favour of disestablishment, but the return for counties of men who are equally true on the same side. And this may be added (it is referred to in the resolution), that, whether we have done little or much; have had to curtail our operations or to alter their character, during the whole of these three years the advance of public opinion in favour of our ultimate objects has been steady and unchecked; so that I do not think there is an intelligent man in England to-day who will say of the cause of disestablishment that it does not stand in a more forward position than it occupied three years ago. I have thought within the last two days that possibly some of us have been induced to take a too sunny view of recent events and present prospects, but I have been reassured to-night by finding that in the *Globe* newspaper, which certainly is not a Liberationist journal, and which would not say a good word for us if it could help it, there is this passage in relation to our present proceedings: "All was joy and rejoicing in the camp of the Liberation Society yesterday. They assembled for their twelfth triennial conference, and mutual congratulations were the order of the day; and well they might be. The record of results achieved by or with the help and co-operation of the society and its friends is of no contemptible order." The writer refers to results. Now results are of two kinds—there are the legislative results of public work, and there are results to be seen in the changes of opinion which in this country always precede legislative work. With regard to legislative work, we certainly have not much to boast about to-night. We had before the election of 1874 six years of what may be termed Parliamentary plenty, and ever since then we have had years of Parliamentary leaness and famine. Our great object has been to prevent the loss of anything that we had gained before. Our energies have been mainly directed to prevent the success of any reactionary attempts on the part of the Government, and in that respect we think we have succeeded, at least, as well as, if not better, than might have been expected. Then we have had to keep alive questions with a view to the future. With regard to the burials question, the experience of the last six years has been of the most striking kind. You know that the late Government has been able to command from time to time majorities

varying from 70 to 120, but on this burials question it has been able to command majorities in opposition to Mr. Osborne Morgan's Bill always small, and sinking so low in one instance as 15 votes. And while it has thus shown its comparative powerlessness in the House of Commons, it has shown an absolute impotence to stay the tide of Liberal feeling in the House of Lords, where the principle of Mr. Osborne Morgan's Bill was affirmed in 1877 by a majority of 16 votes; and what the Lords did then they are not going to undo in the year 1880. As you have been told, they have read the Burials Bill of the Government a second time by what, for the House of Lords, is a decisive majority of 25, and last Thursday week I saw what these eyes scarcely expected to behold—ten bishops of the Church of England, clothed in lawn, file past the throne that they might vote for a measure based upon the principles of religious equality; whereas in the year 1876 one solitary bishop—and his name ought to be mentioned with honour to-night—Bishop Temple—walked into the lobby with Lord Granville when precisely the same question had to be decided. (Cheers.) Now, with reference to the General Election, to which such joyous reference has been made, and to which I dare say some other references of an equally congratulatory kind will be made to-night, I may candidly tell you that the approach of that election was for a time a matter of no small perplexity for those who guide the counsels of this organisation; for we had lived in hope that the next General Election would be one when it would be possible for us to place our questions before the country with greater prominence than on any previous electoral occasion. But, as you know, as patriotic Englishmen we were brought to the conclusion that it was our duty, as well as the duty of our political allies, to avoid all divisions in the Liberal ranks; therefore, we resolved that in England, at least, we would keep the question of disestablishment comparatively in abeyance, while giving it far greater prominence in Scotland. But we at the same time resolved that we would do our best to return to Parliament candidates in favour of disestablishment, and would exert ourselves to circulate information, and excite interest in regard to, those immediate practical questions with which Parliament would certainly deal. Well, if we displayed any virtue in making this resolve, and carrying it out, virtue has certainly been its own reward. [The speech then proceeded to describe the results of the General Election, and stated several facts which are referred to in the society's report.] Now we, as Liberationists, are not yet in that dangerous condition when all men speak well of us; but we have had of late some very agreeable, not to say very flattering, things said of us. We have received compliments from some quarters from which we have not been in the habit of looking for them. Well, I only hope that as we think we have deserved what has been said in regard to the efforts of the friends of religious equality in connection with this election, that we shall continue to deserve them, and that we shall win yet more praise in connection with the electoral battles of the future. I am a great deal more concerned about the work which yet lies before us than I am to exult in the success of the past. The first Napoleon used to say of centralisation that it could only exist by continually increasing; and so we may say of the cause of religious equality, that it can only exist by continually advancing. We have now entered upon a new era, and we have entered it with fresh hopes. Let us, while we rejoice in our past success, and in the success of the moment, be careful to reflect upon the duties which lie before us yet undischarged, upon the difficulties which we shall have to face, and the dangers which it may not be in our power to escape. Let us watch and be sober, and gird up the loins of our minds for the conflicts which are certainly before us. My last word shall be an appeal to those who have not yet taken part in this great movement. Nothing has more touched me—and I think in saying this I express the feelings of not a few who are here—during the last two days, in attending the sittings of the Conference, than the appearance of some of our old veterans. Some of them obviously appeared for the last time, at least upon a Triennial Conference platform; and I could wish that all the young in this assembly had been there, not merely to hear their retrospective allusions, but to listen to their earnest appeals to others to come forward and to finish the work in which they had been so long engaged. Death has sadly thinned the roll of our first supporters. I do not say that our ranks are empty, but they require to be largely recruited, that this work may be speedily completed, and completed in the best possible way. Therefore, I hope that there are here to-night young men and young women who will be fired with the ambition to assist in putting the top-stone upon that grand edifice of religious freedom, the foundations of which were laid in the blood and in the sufferings of their forefathers; every stone of which has been built up by patient toil by those who have followed them: so that in years to come, when they recount the toils and triumphs of this closing part of the nineteenth century, they

may not only be able to refer to them rejoicingly, in regard to the glory and the prosperity of their country; but may have a deep personal interest in that which they recount, and be able to say to their sons and their daughters, "And I too was a Liberator." (Loud cheers.)

The Rev. Dr. ALLON: It has not been from any lack of sympathy with the aims of the Liberation Society that this is the first time I have appeared on its platform on these great triennial occasions. From the time when, in early years, I first formed any notions about ecclesiastical matters, I have been a voluntary pure and simple. The history of ecclesiastical establishments all the world over has produced the conviction that everywhere, with scarcely a qualification, they have been productive of evil; and now, after a lengthened observation of the operation of our Establishment in our own country, I am more deeply and broadly and intensely a voluntary than ever. But then, every man "works in his own order." I have been contented, in less conspicuous ways, to work for this great end; and I do not know that anything but the pertinacity of Mr. Carvell Williams, to whom this society owes so much, would have placed me in the very unpleasant position in which I find myself to-night. One of the great difficulties that we have in this controversy is in producing the conviction that anything like religious principle is to be found in it, or that we, its advocates, can be influenced by anything but the meanest motives. I am somewhat unwilling to remark that the opinions of men are often shaped by their own moral characteristics; but the pertinacity and the malignity with which these gross imputations are made, almost compel me to come to this conclusion. A high-minded controversialist can always afford to take a generous estimate of his opponents, however he may differ from him, and however it may be his duty to oppose him, he will never feel it difficult to give him credit for high intelligence, for perfect sincerity, and for religious motive. I will not undervalue questions of expediency. They are to a large extent the science of the statesman, and in very momentous ways they affect both national and social interests. But this question of the relation of Churches of Jesus Christ to the Civil Government of the country goes much deeper than mere questions of expediency. It touches very sacred themes, and it involves important religious principles, and it affects very powerfully both the Churches of Jesus Christ and the society of a country at large. I can scarcely, therefore, acquit of reckless statement—hardly of wilful misrepresentation—those who represent the advocates of disestablishment, as aiming to destroy the Church. One can only say, if that which we aim to destroy does enter in any essential way into their Church, it is scarcely worth the passion that it excites. Even the Pope has begun to discover that his temporal power is not essential to the exercise of his spiritual function. One ought not to have to repeat so often that our contention has no respect to the character of churches as such; that it lies as much against the most Puritan and Presbyterian establishments as it does against the most sacerdotal of Anglican establishments—(hear, hear)—and our contention has exclusive reference to the *status* which connects the Church of Jesus Christ with the civil Government of a country. The Church itself is legitimate and complete, altogether independent of the question of Disestablishment. Establishment does not make it more a church than it was; disestablishment would not make it less a Church. (Cheers.) No; some of us have come to the conclusion that the Establishment of a Church of Christ necessarily hinders its spiritual prerogative and impairs its religious action. If we differ either doctrinally or ecclesiastically from any Church, therefore our controversy with that Church belongs altogether to a different sphere. We cannot, then, too frequently or too emphatically reiterate that our contention has no respect to the character of the Church that is established, but to the principle that connects it as a Church with the State. Nor do I think that our political action is altogether so ungodly as the pious exclamation of the Mrs. Grundy of the Establishment would induce people to believe. The entire situation has been caused by political action. The Church itself has been established by Acts of Parliament; and students of the times of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth tell us not infrequently without great violence done to the wishes and feelings of the Church itself, Convocation in vain protested against the Act of Uniformity of Elizabeth, and against the appointment of some of her bishops. It was not the Church taking to itself the form of the power of the State; it was the State violently compelling the Church to recognise the royal supremacy, and to submit itself to civil control. At every step in the history of this connection Parliament has determined the conditions of it. Parliament has been the Laban of this ecclesiastical Jacob, and has changed its wages more than seven times. (Laughter.) Our simple contention is that the power that called the institution into existence is the only power that can dissolve it. We are not the first to make the appeal unto Cæsar; we



simply ask that the response which Cæsar has given to the appeal shall be reversed, and that no church shall be placed in the invidious and incongruous position which is incident and necessary to any establishment. This is not a question to be settled by religious conferences, by pious addresses from the pulpit, or even by prayer-meetings. The labourer may pray to Hercules, but Hercules will bid him help himself. We shall seek, and do seek our ends, we trust, in a devout and religious spirit; but the Providence that helps men to their ends demands that they should make use of all reasonable and fitting means for their accomplishment. Now we are asking nothing for ourselves. We do not ask that the presidents of our ecclesiastical assemblies shall take their seats side by side with the bishops in the House of Lords. We have no intention to ask Parliament for a grant to help us in our church building schemes. We have no wish to avail ourselves of tithes, or the imposition of church-rates, to support our ministers and our religious worship. We are not so enamoured of patronage as to desire that our ministers should be appointed to their offices by the Lord Chancellor, or even by private patronage; and certainly we have no wish to see them endowed with exclusive prerogative and function. We simply wish that no ministers of Jesus Christ shall be placed in a position so incongruous and invidious as this. We are not, therefore, greatly moved by the amenities of weekly newspapers which are now continually indulged in. In the *Guardian* newspaper last week, for example—a newspaper, let me say, conducted in the most honourable way, with very great ability, and striving ever to do justice as between church and church and man and man—in the correspondence of that newspaper last week, a clergyman of Rugeley speaks of us as the modern representatives of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, and he tells the British public, that if we be admitted to officiate at graves in the parochial churchyards, we shall be “schismatic functionaries”—whatever that may mean. (Laughter.) Another clergyman in the same newspaper designates us as “sacrilegious robbers,” and he tells us it is not for purposes of burial that we are seeking to pass the Burials Bill, but that we may publicly humble the Church, and he says that for this purpose we are willing to sacrifice common honesty and fairness to our open hatred. Well, we have heard such things before. During the controversies of the last fifty years they have been characteristic; and a somewhat lengthy observation has led me to the conclusion that these “cultured” gentlemen, who are such a great blessing to the parishes of the kingdom—(laughter)—have a bad pre-eminence in bad language. (Cheers and laughter.) I say deliberately I do not know where I could look for so much coarse invective, and so much malignant misrepresentation as I find in some of the religious newspapers. It is very singular that in the light of these great principles these gentlemen should speculate on the degree of our venality, whether or not this Burials Bill will be a sufficient bribe to the Liberation Society, whether or not the advent to power of a Liberal Government, which we have largely contributed to place there, will encourage us to undue presumption. Already it is suggested that it would be very ungenerous of us to take advantage of the political necessities of the Liberal party to insist upon our pound of flesh, and we are told that we should be very ungrateful if after the concession of the Burials Bill we are not satisfied—if, like *Oliver Twist*, we audaciously ask for more. (Cheers and laughter.) Now have these gentlemen any conception of what a religious principle is? Are they capable of giving any men credit for disinterested and conscientious advocacy, or do they really think us to be the sordid miscreants they represent, just bent upon getting anything that in the scramble of public affairs we can lay our hands upon? How often do we need to say that we have come to the conclusion, that it has come to be with us a deep religious conviction that the Church as established in this country is a very grave social wrong, is a source of a thousand evils to the community generally? I suppose it is morally certain that numerically it does not comprise half the religious population of the country, and yet, notwithstanding its prestige, notwithstanding its great wealth, notwithstanding its eminent learning, which Nonconformists are never slow to recognise, notwithstanding its high prerogative, it has been continually and steadily, with increasing ratio, losing its hold upon the population of the land; so that at the present moment there are districts of the country where it is in a ridiculous minority. Even in the national Universities, in the senior wranglerships at Cambridge—I am not so well acquainted with the first-class lists of Oxford—nearly two-thirds of the wranglers during the last 18 or 20 years have been Nonconformists. (Cheers.) Then, again, throughout its history it has been greatly inimical to all questions of public freedom and of national righteousness; and the vote of the bishops on the Afghan War and the Zulu War, and the suffrage of the clergy given to Lord Beaconsfield's Government in the pursuit of its iniquitous ends, are only the culmination of a long series of contentions on behalf of prerogative and against popular liberty. A national church should keep the national con-

science; the national clergy should rebuke and restrain the civil governor when he is doing wrong; bishops should surely speak fearlessly in the name of the Lord of Hosts. Now, notoriously the English Establishment as such has never done that; it has left that great function to be discharged by the Nonconformist churches of the land. (Cheers.) Is there a single record on the Statute Book in England in which a victory for freedom, for philanthropy, for spiritual religion has been won by the Established Church or even led by it? I very much doubt it. Then is there an institution existing in England at this moment that is the cause of so much social dissension and so much religious bitterness? Is there any chasm so deep, so wide, and into which so many precious things have been cast, as that which the Establishment of this country makes? I doubt it. I doubt whether there exists among us any cause of difference and bitterness so great and so mischievous as this. Is there any equal cause of legislative embarrassment, of legal perplexity, of public scandal? Why, at the present moment our law-courts are reduced to a ridiculous imbecility—(laughter)—through the persistent squabbles of this systematic Church. There is nothing like it in Christendom. Then national sanction has been given to the priestly assumptions and sacerdotal arrogance which, in the Nonconformist Church of Rome, we can afford to laugh at, but which, sustained and endowed by the British nation, become matters of very serious and just grief. Is it likely that the concession of a Burials Bill, or the accession of a Liberal Government to power, will very materially affect our controversy? The case is too deep for the bribe of a Burials Bill—(cheers)—and it is too broad to be precipitated even by the accession of a Liberal Government. So we pursue our advocacy from one point to another. We secure victories as public opinion ripens them for us; and we are not very careful to achieve victories until, as now in the case of the Burials Bill, public opinion is ripe. We have not shown ourselves very eager to avail ourselves of the political embarrassment of party. We have not been very eager to snatch a chance vote. Again and again we have shown that in the presence of a great national exigency, we can subordinate our particular contention. The descendants of the men who stood by the seven bishops—the descendants of the men who refused toleration for themselves more than once, rather than sacrifice the Protestantism of the nation—are hardly to be reproached with selfishness and time-serving, in securing the great objects which we now have in view. The Liberal Government that has come into power is simply one of the means for the further advance and enlightenment of public opinion. We should be very thankful for whatever sympathy and help it may render us. We shall not be greatly dismayed if it prove indifferent, or even hostile. We are not afraid for our cause because of the Government that may happen to be in power; but it is well that the Liberal Government should know that while there may be national exigencies which may induce us, as we have before been induced, to hold our special questions in abeyance, it will be quite another thing if we are treated with gratuitous disregard; if our friends be refused their just share in the Liberal programme of the future. We are not the Liberal party. We do not make selfish demands upon the Liberal party that we should have undue preference shown to us. But we do claim that in the programme of Liberal progress we should be treated according to our numbers, and according to the popular sympathy that our principles have commanded. (Cheers.) I am very thankful to the Government for the prompt way in which they have taken up the Burials Question, and endeavoured to do justice to our claim. This Bill gives us all that we, as religious Nonconformists, want. But we have never taken this ground; we have never fought the battle of liberty simply for the personal enjoyment of it. We have been found fighting side by side with the Roman Catholic and with the Jew; and I for one am prepared to fight side by side with the infidel and the atheist—(loud cheers)—in all the questions that compromise their civil rights as citizens. Now, I hold that the ground of Lord Selborne's argument is fatal to the restrictions that still remain in his Bill. If burial in the parochial churchyard be a civil right, then I hold that every citizen ought to be permitted to exercise that right without any violence done to his conscience. “The legs of the lame are not equal,” and the Government Bill appears to me not to rest upon any distinct principle, but to be an expediency, a necessity of concession to men who can no longer be denied. I think that it justifies so far the resistance to it of the Established clergy. If it were based upon a broad principle of civil liberty it would necessarily be extended to every citizen of the land. I, for one, therefore, am not afraid of being misunderstood when I contend that the clause restricting the service to a “Christian” service should be struck out of the Bill. (Cheers.) Lord Selborne says that this is a Christian country legally. Well, the assertion proves either too much or too little. If it be legally a Christian country, that, in the strict sense of the term,

is the legal fiction; if it be a Christian country in the sense in which he intends it, it is more—it is a Christian country in an Episcopal form. I maintain, therefore, that there is no ground upon which this limitation can be maintained, and I do hope that the Government will be wise enough and bold enough to remove this Bill from the ground of expediency, and base it upon the broad principle of religious liberty. (Cheers.) We are accused of seeking the use of parochial churchyards, notwithstanding our refusal to pay church rates; that is, we want to have the use of that which we are unwilling to maintain. My answer to that is twofold. First, in all our cemeteries the burial fees are found sufficient to yield very respectable profits, and I see no reason why they should not be as remunerative in churchyards as they are in cemeteries. (Cheers.) Next, if this is not satisfactory, I say boldly, make the churchyards parochial property; let them be handed over to the overseers of the parish; let these have the control of interments, and, if needs be, levy parochial rates in supplement for this purpose. I venture to say that no Nonconformist will utter one word of objection to such levying of parochial rates. What we object to is, that the churchyards should be under the control of an intolerant clergyman, and should be used in the interests of an exclusive Church. We are said to be indifferent to the bondage in which the clergyman himself has hitherto been held, that while we are contending for liberty—while we can bury whom we will and with what service we like—we are altogether indifferent to the position of the clergyman who must bury all the parishioners who are brought to him, and with one uniform service. To this we have two replies. First, the clergyman of a parish is—I use the term in no offensive way—strictly a Government official; he is placed there to minister to the parishioners as such, and he is bound by his very position to bury all who are brought to the churchyard. Clergymen cannot claim the prerogatives of a functionary and the liberties of a free man at the same time. Another reply that I have to make is that the common service which is imposed upon the clergyman is not of our imposition exactly. It is the natural result of the Act of Uniformity which was so eagerly and indecently passed in order to destroy us Dissenters. Now, it is rather too much to expect that we shall make this disability of the clergyman our Nonconformist grievance. If the man is hoist by his own petard it is no fault of ours. If the Act of Uniformity has recoiled upon its enactors, we surely are not to be reflected upon. I do not know a more curious or instructive Nemesis in history than the history of the Act of Uniformity. It was intended as an Act to extinguish Dissenters, but the Toleration Act which followed a little while after relieved Dissenters from their disabilities, while it left the Act binding upon the Established clergy. For instance, the Act of Uniformity prohibited public worship, save as conducted by an episcopally ordained clergyman. The Act of Toleration relieved Dissenters from this prohibition, but it left it binding upon those who were not Dissenters; so that to this day no one who is not an episcopally ordained clergyman can enter a pulpit of the Establishment. Her Majesty's chaplains in Scotland are schismatics in England, and are not permitted to minister in English pulpits. If the Apostle Paul could appear, he could not legally appear in a single pulpit of the Establishment. (Cheers and laughter.) The Act of Uniformity provided that no public worship should be conducted save according to the forms of the Book of Common Prayer. The Act of Toleration relieved Nonconformists from this obligation; but it left it binding upon the clergy themselves. They narrowed their own liberty; they tightened the fetters upon their own limbs, simply that they might have the pleasure of destroying Nonconformists. Nonconformists escaped the destruction; but the disabilities remain with the clergy; and to this day the rigid uniformity of the Episcopal service, which is very different from what that Service was prior to the Act of Uniformity, remains the Nemesis of the wrong doing, and the Burial Service is only part of that inheritance. It is a little too much that clergymen come puling to us and telling us that we are altogether indifferent to their great sufferings—that while we may bury whom we will, and use what service we like, they are compelled to bury all parishioners with the “Office Appointed for the Burial of the Dead.” And yet, I think, we are so far true to our principles that we should have no objection for the conscience of the clergyman to be relieved. I doubt whether there is a Nonconformist in the House of Commons who would not vote for such relief to the conscience of the clergyman if the rights of the laity could be equitably secured. But I hope there is not a Nonconformist who would vote for any such relief to the conscience of the clergyman, unless the parishioners were secured from his caprice and from his intolerance. With that security, I think we are so far true to our principles that we will join in any effort to relieve the clergyman from what must be a very painful obligation imposed upon him by the present Act. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. R. T. MIDDLETON, M.P., supported the resolution. In doing so he said that in

Scotland there were many testimonies from the ministers of the Established Church that when the proper time came they were ready to go into the movement to support the Disestablishment of their own Church. (Applause.) He also alluded to the increasing interest that was taken in the Disestablishment question by members on both sides of the House of Commons.

The resolution was put and carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN said he regretted the absence of Mr. Caine, M.P., from indisposition. Mr. Spurgeon was also unable to be present for the same reason. [The meeting, on this announcement being made, manifested unmistakable signs of disappointment.]

Mr. RORJOHNS (one of the secretaries) read the following letter from Mr. Spurgeon:—

“I have been reckoning upon being at my college to day, and finishing up with the Liberation Society; but, alas! a continuance of very severe work and an excess of anxiety have combined to put me out of the field. I am obliged to keep within my room to-day with a painful foot. It is a small affair, and will, I hope, soon pass away; but it is just of this sort, that if I am quiet it may go off, but if I stand upon it I shall probably be imprisoned for a month. There is no need for me to run this great risk in order to express opinions which everybody knows. I pray earnestly that our country may no longer think it needful to make an unacceptable profession of being religious by perpetrating gross injustices—the injustice of favouring one religious sect above the rest. This stumbling-block in the way of Christian union will, I hope, in due time be removed; and then I hope there will be no occasion for these protests, which are always thought to be unfriendly assaults. May you have a right good meeting.—Yours truly, C. H. SPURGEON.” (Loud applause.)

Mr. FIRTH, M.P. for Chelsea, moved the following resolution:—

“The meeting rejoices that, as a result of the recent General Election, there has been returned to Parliament an unprecedented number of members who may be expected to support the society's Parliamentary policy. And the meeting has pleasure in finding that one of the first fruits of the election has been the prompt introduction by the Liberal Government of a measure for greatly extending religious liberty in all parochial burial places.”

He presumed that, after serving for nine years with pleasure upon the Executive Committee of the Liberation Society, he might fairly be regarded as amongst those who were expected to support the society's Parliamentary policy. (Applause.) What that policy might be was a matter that had yet to be decided as time went on by those who ruled the counsels of the Liberation Society. He trusted, however, that the counsels of the association might be guided to a considerable extent by the principles of moderation. There could be no doubt that the Liberation Society, and those who supported its principles, occupied to-day in this country a unique and an unexpected position. Not merely were they the backbone of the Liberal party, but during the late election contest they had done more than any other single agency to bring about the result at which they all rejoiced. (Applause.) That influence and that work had been recognised in the highest quarters. Mr. Gladstone himself—(loud cheers)—had so recognised it; and he (Mr. Firth) ventured to express the hope that, possessing as they did in the House of Commons a dominant, a vigorous, a persistent, and an earnest influence, they would not be unduly anxious to put forward those questions which they held so dear, if the advancement of them would tend prejudicially to affect the constitution and permanence of their party rule. (Hear, hear.) How different was the position occupied by Nonconformists to-day to that which they ever occupied before in English history! Under Queen Elizabeth and the Archbishops Whitgift and Parker, their life was not a pleasant one; under King James I., when separation from the Church was, by one of the canons of 1603, punished by excommunication, it was, if possible, less pleasant; and under the successor of King James, and under the remarkable doctrines of Bishop Hall, the life of Nonconformity was not a pleasant one. They had, perhaps, a breath of freedom under Cromwell—(cheers)—but it was during the reign of that most religious king, Charles II.—(laughter)—that the monopoly of religion and of religious opinion was carried to the utmost point. They had much reason for satisfaction at the age in which they lived, when they recollected what their brethren and ancestors suffered under the Five Mile and Conventicle Acts, and under the Test and Corporation Acts, which provided that a man should not be allowed to hold office in the Army or Navy without taking the sacrament of the Church of England. (Laughter.) Dr. Allon had said that Nonconformity had always been associated with liberty and the maintenance of the Protestant religion. He (Mr. Firth) was reading, not long ago, in the history of the reign of Queen Anne, something with respect to the measure introduced by the Jacobite Ministry, the last of the Ministries of her reign, which measure was intended, as many of them might know, for the purpose of extinguishing Dissent. The Schism Bill provided that no one should be allowed to teach or act as tutor or teacher



in the country unless he received a licence from the bishop, and unless within a year he had taken the sacrament according to the Church of England. The Jacobite Ministry at the end of the reign of Queen Anne supposed that this measure, if carried out, would extinguish Dissent. The Bill was carried, and was to have been signed by Queen Anne on a certain day. It seemed to him that there was a lesson of patience that could be learnt from these histories of the past which might be of use to Dissenters among the victories of to-day. The times were, indeed, changed since then. One by one the restrictions which existed had been fought against and removed, and before long they might hope to see the fruition of the work they had been engaged in during many long years. In education itself the coast was becoming clear. The Church no longer claimed for itself the monopoly of education, and in this respect, too, they were arriving at a better system than ever existed before. He supposed that, before very long, they would see all restrictions removed. Speaking simply as a politician, he hoped that through the agency of the society there would, before long, be removed from the sphere of political conflict, the antagonistic agency which the Church had always exerted. That agency, as had been said by a previous speaker, had always been adverse to liberty and to freedom. (Cheers.)

Mr. J. COLLINGS, M.P. for Ipswich, spoke as follows:—I have been requested, by your chairman to second the resolution, which our friend Mr. Firth has so ably moved; and, in doing so, I shall content myself with occupying your attention for a minute or two; first, because some of us are wanted in another place; and, secondly, because I think the magnificent speeches which you have heard to-night have told us nearly everything that it is necessary for us to know about this question. Mr. Barran, at the opening of this meeting, said that he was a Nonconformist and something more. I am here also as a Nonconformist and something more; that is, a citizen of this great tax-paying, rate-paying, law-abiding nation—(cheers and laughter)—and on that ground of citizenship I think we may safely rest our demand. I thank Dr. Allon—(cheers)—for the high ground and the comprehensive manner in which he put that claim, and on which I will say nothing, lest I might lower it from the high pedestal on which he placed it. (Hear, hear.) Now, Mr. Barran said further that as Nonconformists, if the Burials Bill should pass, we might be almost satisfied. Whatever we might be satisfied with as Nonconformists, as citizens we have a very simple programme, as simple as it is comprehensive, and as modest as it is both. It is that every law in school or university, in church or churchyard, referring to either of these, which marks a man in whatever position, living or dead, as inferior to his fellow-men, on account of the religious opinions which he holds, or has held, shall be totally effaced from the Statute Book of England. (Loud cheers.) Now, I think that is very simple, very comprehensive, and its modesty is above all—(“hear, hear,” and laughter)—because if you will notice that in preferring that claim we do not ask a single benefit for ourselves over any other citizen in the land. (Hear, hear.) I confess that I have very little to do with the arguments of the supporters of the Church when they tell us that the religion of the land will suffer if they are disestablished. It seems to me if you will only adopt the new methods of freeing religion by restoring the 22,000 clergymen to the nation in which they live, instead of keeping them as a separate body, you will make the religion of this land a greater reality and far more effectual than now. (Cheers.) At the same time, it is as a citizen claiming equal rights with my fellow-citizens that I ask for this claim. I would ask the members of the Liberation Society not to spend too much trouble in preaching to the saved, but to send out their instructions into quarters where they are needed. In a short time the larger portion of our population will be enfranchised. Another right, precisely of the same character, perhaps not so high in its degree as we contend for, will be conferred on the mass of our fellow-citizens. That enfranchisement may be in two years hence—it might be three; but let your society take steps that, when their day of deliverance comes and they have that inestimable right which we call a vote, that they will know how to exercise it when this question comes before them. I quite agree with Mr. Firth that we are not going to be so foolish as to join with the enemies of the Government to turn them out or to embarrass them. The Government have five or six questions before them. When they are passing any one they are making more easy the other four or five—(hear, hear)—and, therefore, the only condition we make for a Liberal Government is that they shall keep moving, and not have that sort of motion, you know, which consists in “marking time”—(laughter)—but that they shall go onwards; because I contend that a Liberal Government, the moment it stops, must fall to pieces. It is like a bicycle for that; as long as it is going on it is a very brilliant performance; but the moment it stops or gets very near stopping, there is a wreck and a danger. (Cheers.) That being so, let me ask those who are inside what I might call

the “caucus” of the society, to see that their instruction goes where that instruction is needed. I don’t want their books; but I know many who do; and, therefore, instead of spending their money on myself, or such as I am, let them send it to the most unlikely people who want the information. Cornwall was mentioned by one speaker. As a West countryman, I know these districts; and I can tell you that the establishment of a bishopric in Cornwall means the decline of Nonconformity and the decline of Liberal thought, because it takes a live fish to swim against the stream—(hear, hear)—and although Nonconformists have done many glorious things and acts of heroism, such as, if they could be written, would be second to none that history tells us of, yet it is unfair that the poor men there shall be subject to the many influences which I need not refer to as far as country Nonconformists are concerned. They are subject now to ten times the pressure they were before, and it is too much to expect that they shall stand against it. Therefore, I say that the great citizen question of to-day is—as soon as we can get it to the front—to say that every man in this year 1880 shall be equal to any other man, notwithstanding his religious opinions. We will say to our Church friends, “We will no longer permit you to come and shake hands with us in the street, to receive us into your houses, to treat us as good friends, and then to support a law that by inference, and often by fact, shall degrade us something down beneath your level. What we are in the streets, in the houses, in our position, whether it be civil or any other in the eye of the country, that we will be in the Statute Book of the country; and it will be no argument to us to say that there is nothing bearing hardly upon us, that there is nothing but sentimental grievances. We do not know whether they are sentimental or not, whether they hurt us or not; we will have none of them. We can only wait until our turn comes, and if we keep Liberal Governments in power, although you know omnibuses cannot drive six abreast through Temple Bar, yet six or seven will go one after another, and therefore our conveyance will come in time. (Cheers.)

The Rev. A. OLIVER (of Glasgow), who met with a cordial reception, moved the following resolution:—

The meeting regards with special satisfaction the fact that, with but few exceptions, the Members of Parliament elected for Scotland are either favourable to the Disestablishment of the Scottish Church, or are willing to accept the decision of the Scottish people in regard to it; and the meeting trusts that there will be unremitting efforts, both in England and Scotland, to secure the early accomplishment of that object.

He said: The Kirk party in Scotland did their best to make this Disestablishment matter a test question at the recent General Election, and after they conjured with all their power from Shetland south to the Solway, they were able to return only seven, and then after a while another, making eight—(laughter)—and I can assure you, when we get the franchise extended, unless it be from one of our universities, you will not have another Tory member up from the whole of Scotland. (Cheers.) We have done pretty well at this last election in disestablishing them. (Laughter.) I am here to affirm—and I have abundance of facts to establish it in the face of any man who chooses to question it—that what we propose to do in the way of Disestablishment is the very thing that will do the Church of Scotland good. It is a beneficent process, though not very pleasant to those who may be undergoing it. (Laughter.) No surgical operation is pleasant at the time, but it is profitable in the end; and I have no doubt that those who are most opposed to it will very soon admit it. I look upon endowments as State crutches. Did you ever hear of a man becoming strong who perpetually leant on crutches? Let him throw them away, and stand on his own feet. (Cheers.) That is what we have been preaching all our lives to the members of the Church of Scotland. We have set her an example: let her throw the crutches away. (Cheers.) The Irish people did not throw the crutches away; but they have been taken from them, and they have been benefited. The colonists have received the same benefit; and what are the Non-established Churches at this moment testifying? The Church I represent—the United Presbyterian Church—represents 500 congregations, and half-a-million of people. The Church of Scotland will say she is three times stronger; but we are raising more money by hard, voluntary effort than she is raising. The Church of Scotland raises £330,000 by voluntary effort, more than she is drawing from the State. The Free and United Presbyterian Churches raise £900,000—nearly three times as much as the Establishment. (Cheers.) What has made the Church of Scotland active? My memory goes back to the time when she was not so. Dr. Chalmers said—and he was not only an able, but a far-seeing man, advocate of Establishments though he was—it required a strong Dissentism to keep the Kirk active. It is the Dissent outside that has made the Kirk active and earnest inside. (Cheers.) What I say is, Let the Kirk rely on her own strength: she is able-bodied. North of the Border we do not give poor relief to the able-bodied: we say they can work for

themselves. The Kirk of Scotland is able to support herself, and she would be all the abler and better if she did it. We are her best friends in seeking to disestablish her. (Hear, hear.) But there is another reason, and one which touches us to the quick. We are a patient people in Scotland. We have not been saying much, but are feeling a great deal, and we will say a good deal more by-and-by on the injustice of the Kirk Establishment. We do not suffer from any burial grievances, or anything of that kind. The dead can be buried anywhere and at any time; but we suffer from the Kirk as a grievous injustice. When a shepherd goes across to another shepherd’s flock and milks it and carries off the milk, we say that is wrong. When a man leaps over our garden wall and takes our fruit, we say the same thing, and hand over both to the constable. What is the Kirk of Scotland empowered by the law to do? To milk other people’s flocks and gather the crops from other people’s vineyards; and if we are to be plain in our language we say that is legalised robbery, and we shall not submit to it any more than we can help. (Cheers.) When a new Kirk is wanted for a parish to replace an old one, or when a new manse has been built, who are appealed to? The proprietors of the land, no matter whether they belong to the Church or to any Church at all. I remember hearing once of a poor man who had got bewildered among the Highland hills as the night was going on. He came upon a hut, and seeing a light he knocked most fiercely, but there was no answer. He cried in an agony of despair, “Is there any Christian here?” A voice answered, “No; we are all McDougalls.” (Much laughter.) And when the Kirk of Scotland wants a new church, the question is not whether they are Christian, but whether the McDougall tribe are proprietors. She does not ask whether they believe her creed, but whether they can pay her taxes. Not only is the ground taxed for the kirk, the very things below the earth are taxed. In many cases the minister has a right to coals without paying for them; the very peat bogs are taxed for the parish minister; the very fish of the sea have been taxed; and the very birds of the Bass Rock are taxed for the parish minister. The minister of North Berwick has a right every year to twelve solan geese, and it is added, “with the feathers on.” (Laughter.) That is the way we support the Kirk of Scotland. The Kirk of Scotland draws from what we call in the North *teinds*, glebe lands, manse, and so on, some £330,000. The very bread and wine used at the Lord’s table has to be paid for by taxation. I am rated one penny to help to pay the communion elements of my parish minister; but, though I have been fifteen years in Glasgow, I have never seen him in the flesh—(laughter)—he does not look after his parishioners. Well, how do we use this £330,000 annually? Take the parish of Forfar. The minister there gets £540 per annum—as a minister I don’t want to say he is over-paid, by any means. (Laughter.) How many members has he? 2,803. The minister of the Montrose parish gets £445, and he has 2,900 members. South Leith is a fatter living. It is £920, and there are 2,552 members. What I want you to notice is that here are congregations able to raise double or treble what the minister is drawing as stipend from the national funds, and there you have them sitting with their hands in their pockets, and carefully keeping them there—(laughter)—and suffering themselves to be fed at the national expense; and we call that north of the Tweed a national testimony to religion. (Laughter.) I remember once, when a student, hearing a Protestant lecturer giving his audience an account of a Popish saint, who acquired a great odour of sanctity by living in the hollow trunk of a tree doing nothing; and he put it to the audience, “What do you think of it?” and a broad Hibernian voice said, “Well, sir, the first remark I would make is that he was a lazy rascal.” (Laughter.) I am not going to apply the case by any means to these churches; but I say, if I apply the epithet “lazy,” it is one I think you will say is well deserved. A national testimony to religion! It is a national testimony to the indolence of these people, and the sooner we have it swept away the better for religion. (Cheers.) Kirriemuir I must distinguish; I will not conceal names, and anybody can challenge their accuracy. That church has 1,000 members, and when I was there a few weeks ago I found they had difficulty in paying the organist of their church £50. Such is the benumbing influence of State pay. I hope this will stimulate their liberality. Allow me to give you one or two statements about the lean kine—and they are very lean, skin and bone, and hardly even that. (Laughter.) What are the things we see in the Highlands? I know the Highlands, and have lived in them, and have travelled in them again and again, and I know the parishes I speak of, and the ministers, too, who do not like me to say anything about it. Take the parish of Fodderty. I worshipped in the church many years ago, and I counted twenty people in it. At the last Parliamentary return there were seventeen members, and for teaching these he gets £20 16s. a head. Then go to the island of Lewis, which I know from one end to the other, and you have a parish here called Lochs. When the minister left

that parish he was transferred to another parish in the same island, and some of the sharp-eyed people of that island wrote to some of the people in the North, and said that as he was careful over one sheep in his former parish, they had sent him to this one to be faithful over two. (Laughter.) I must, however, do him justice, for he returns seven members, and gets £32 a head for them. The last illustration is that where I worshipped in a manse 35 years ago. The minister did not think it worth while to go to the church that day: it was wet, the drawing-room was large enough for the audience. The parish minister of the present day let me say of him—for I must speak of the parish ministers of the North as able, scholarly men—the parish minister of Barvas with all his ability and culture, returns five members, two male and three female. (Laughter.) He is always first in good works, and he gets £51 a-head for them. But I must tell you more than that. In the roll of membership is the minister himself, he makes one. (“Oh, oh,” and laughter.) And then you have his wife. (Renewed laughter.) Now it is said that wives can lecture; but I think here the parish minister can lecture his wife for nothing, and if that be the case, we have him with three members at the rate of £100 for each member. That’s the way the money goes—(laughter)—and that is only a sample. If you want more you can consult the Parliamentary returns. Now the Free churches are filled, and the Established churches are empty, or almost so. The Free Church ministers have their hands full of work, and the Established ministers have almost nothing to do, and if it be true of the Gaelic tongue, which I never mastered fully, or hardly at all, they must have very little to do, for it is said that a man who is master of that language neither requires to think nor write to prepare for speaking. (Laughter.) And not only do the Free Church ministers do the work, but the Established ministers who do not do it get all the pay. Now, we are hearing the ministers of the Church saying that everything will go wrong if you disestablish that grievous scarecrow in the Highlands. I say it is a national testimony to injustice, and common decency demands that we should have it abolished. I remember an Established gentleman, who was trying to put down the Free Kirk, writing these lines—

“The Free Kirk,

The dear Kirk,

The Kirk witho’ot the steeple.”

But there was a Free Church fully equal to the occasion, and he answered with other three, the merit of which is their truth:—

“The auld Kirk,

The cauld Kirk,

The Kirk witho’ot the people.”

(Cheers and much laughter.) We can preach in a church without a steeple. The lack of a steeple is no great lack if you have the people and a minister with brains; but to see a man with brains in a pulpit preaching to empty benches, in scores of parishes, is a spectacle, I submit, not for edification. (Hear, hear.) What I say is that now we have a Liberal Government in power—a Government that goes on the lines of truth and of righteousness—(cheers)—we have a right to think that they will not lose time in redressing our grievances. (Hear, hear.) We want equality of this kind. There must be a levelling down, and the Kirk of Scotland must be deprived of those endowments that are not hers, and they must be applied for national purposes, and she must be left, like other religious bodies, to pay her own way. (Cheers.) I said we are a patient people. So we are; but patience has its limits, and I think, after the facts I have mentioned, you must admit that we have come very near to the limit of that patience. (Hear, hear.) I demand, then, that this wrong shall cease. Sir, in the name of justice that is outraged, in the interests of the Church which State patronage has injured, and most of all in the interest of religion, I demand that this wrong shall be abolished. I call on you to sound this cry from Cornwall to Caithness. I assure you that, north of the border, it shall be nobly echoed; and we must let our Liberal leaders know that we need not only redress, but that we demand it, and shall not be silent until we have it, and in that spirit, if we go on, I am sure as far as Scotland, we shall not be very far from the beginning of the end. (Loud and prolonged cheers.)

The Rev. F. TRESTRAIL (President of the Baptist Union) seconded the resolution, which was carried.

Mr. ELLINGTON: I have now to express the gratitude we all feel for the presidency of our chairman to-night, and also for the earnest, constant service he is ever ready to give to all Liberal measures. (“Hear, hear,” and cheers.)

Mr. G. C. WHITELEY, M.A., seconded the resolution. He said that Bradford had done a great many good things in its time, and the cause of Liberation owed a good deal to Bradford. It had returned their great and noble leader Edward Miall. (Loud cheers.) It sent him to Parliament to be one of the pioneers to urge their cause. It had seconded that great effort by returning Mr. Illingworth, and in that it had done well. (Cheers.)

The resolution was carried by acclamation. The CHAIRMAN having briefly thanked the meeting for the compliment paid him, the proceedings terminated.